

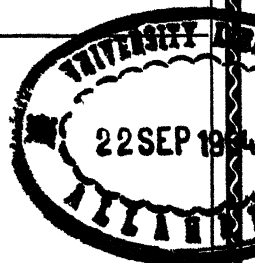
MODERN ENGLISH READINGS

BIOGRAPHY SHORT STORIES POEMS
ESSAYS PLAYS NOVEL

Edited by
ROGER SHERMAN LOOMIS
and
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Columbia University

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P R E F A C E

A course in English composition may attempt and achieve many happy results, but it seems clear that among them some are more important than others. Three aims that have controlled the selection of readings in this book are:

1. The teaching of correct and vital expression through the study of models.
2. The stimulation of the student's interest in literature by giving him some of the best fiction, drama, essays, biography, and poetry of the last hundred years or more to read attentively and enjoy.
3. An introduction to those modern problems which, if left unsolved or wrongly solved, mean individual misery and social and national disaster.

The authors covered range in time from Wordsworth to Sinclair Lewis, and in point of view from Newman to Bertrand Russell. Within these covers is a complete novel by Hardy, a complete biography by Strachey. The poems, stories, familiar essays, and plays are all complete. Some of the longer expository articles have been condensed, but without injury, we believe, to structure or continuity; and certain episodes have been culled from longer autobiographies, since no single autobiography affords a sufficient variety of experience and style. Student Helps and Theme Suggestions offer guidance to student reading and classroom discussion and some possible answers to the question, "What Shall I Write About?"

We have endeavored to direct this selection at the interests of young men and women in college today. Some selections are concerned directly with college life; many, with the experiences and the problems of youth. And all, we hope, will find responsive, if not enthusiastic, readers among college students.

We wish to express our thanks to the authors and publishers who have generously allowed us to include copyrighted material. Specific indebtedness we acknowledge in our footnotes. Our gratitude is especially due to the generations of college men and women who have patiently sat in our classes and from whom we have learned most of what we know of the desires and needs of those for whom we have prepared this book.

Finally, we wish to thank for their assistance Professors Dorothy Brewster and Angus Burrell, Miss Melissa Stidham, and Mrs. Bevereaux Roland.

R. S. L.
D. L. C.

Columbia University
April, 1934

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FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE¹

by Lytton Strachey

EVERYONE knows the popular conception of Florence Nightingale. The saintly, self-sacrificing woman, the delicate maiden of high degree who threw aside the pleasures of a life of ease to succour the afflicted, the Lady with the Lamp, gliding through the horrors of the hospital at Scutari, and consecrating with the radiance of her goodness the dying soldier's couch—the vision is familiar to all. But the truth was different. The Miss Nightingale of fact was not as facile fancy painted her. She worked in another fashion, and towards another end; she moved under the stress of an impetus which finds no place in the popular imagination. A Demon possessed her. Now demons, whatever else they may be, are full of interest. And so it happens that in the real Miss Nightingale there was more that was interesting than in the legendary one; there was also less that was agreeable.

Her family was extremely well-to-do, and connected by marriage with a spreading circle of other well-to-do families. There was a large country house in Derbyshire; there was another in the New Forest; there were Mayfair rooms for the London season and all its finest parties; there were tours on the Continent with even more than the usual number of Italian operas and glimpses at the celebrities of Paris. Brought up among such advantages, it was only natural to suppose that Florence would show a proper appreciation of them by doing her duty in that state of life unto which it had pleased God to call her—in other words, by marrying, after a fitting number of dances and dinner-parties, an eligible gentleman, and living happily ever afterwards. Her sister, her cousins, all the young ladies of her acquaintance, were either getting ready to do this or had already done it. It was inconceivable that Florence should dream of anything else; yet dream she did. Ah! To do her duty in that state of life unto which it had pleased God to call her! Assuredly she would not be behindhand in doing her duty; but unto what state of life *had* it pleased God to call her? That was the question. God's calls are many, and they are strange. Unto what state of life had it pleased Him to call Charlotte Corday, or Elizabeth of Hungary? What was that secret voice in her ear, if it was not a call? Why had she felt, from her earliest years, those mysterious promptings towards . . . she hardly knew what but certainly towards something very different from anything around her? Why, as a child in the nursery, when her sister had shown a healthy pleasure in tearing her dolls to pieces, had *she* shown an almost morbid one in sewing them up again? Why was she driven now to minister to the poor in their

¹ From Lytton Strachey, *Eminent Victorians*. By permission of Harcourt Brace and Co.

cottages, to watch by sick-beds, to put her dog's wounded paw into elaborate splints as if it was a human being? Why was her head filled with queer imaginations of the country house at Embley turned, by some enchantment, into a hospital, with herself as matron moving about among the beds? Why was even her vision of heaven itself filled with suffering patients to whom she was being useful? So she dreamed and wondered, and, taking out her diary, she poured into it the agitations of her soul. And then the bell rang, and it was time to go and dress for dinner.

As the years passed, a restlessness began to grow upon her. She was unhappy, and at last she knew it. Mrs. Nightingale, too, began to notice that there was something wrong. It was very odd; what could be the matter with dear Flo? Mr. Nightingale suggested that a husband might be advisable; but the curious thing was that she seemed to take no interest in husbands. And with her attractions, and her accomplishments, too! There was nothing in the world to prevent her making a really brilliant match. But no! She would think of nothing but how to satisfy that singular craving of hers to be *doing* something. As if there was not plenty to do in any case, in the ordinary way, at home. There was the china to look after, and there was her father to be read to after dinner. Mrs. Nightingale could not understand it; and then one day her perplexity was changed to consternation and alarm. Florence announced an extreme desire to go to Salisbury Hospital for several months as a nurse; and she confessed to some visionary plan of eventually setting up in a house of her own in a neighbouring village, and there founding "something like a Protestant Sisterhood, without vows, for women of educated feelings." The whole scheme was summarily brushed aside as preposterous: and Mrs. Nightingale, after the first shock of terror, was able to settle down again more or less comfortably to her embroidery. But Florence, who was now twenty-five and felt that the dream of her life had been shattered, came near to desperation.

And, indeed, the difficulties in her path were great. For not only was it an almost unimaginable thing in those days for a woman of means to make her own way in the world and to live in independence, but the particular profession for which Florence was clearly marked out both by her instincts and her capacities was at that time a peculiarly disreputable one. A "nurse" meant then a coarse old woman, always ignorant, usually dirty, often brutal, a Mrs. Gamp, in bunched-up sordid garments, tipping at the brandy-bottle or indulging in worse irregularities. The nurses in the hospitals were especially notorious for immoral conduct; sobriety almost unknown among them; and they could hardly be trusted to carry out the simplest medical duties. Certainly, things have changed since those days; and that they *have* changed is due, far more than to any other human being, to Miss Nightingale herself. It is not to be wondered at that her parents should have shuddered at the notion of their daughter devoting her life to such an occupation. "It was as if," she herself said afterward, "I had wanted to be a kitchen-maid." Yet the want, absurd, impracticable as it was, not only remained fixed immovably in

her heart, but grew in intensity day by day. Her wretchedness deepened into a morbid melancholy. Everything about her was vile, and she herself, it was clear, to have deserved such misery, was even viler than her surroundings. Yes, she had sinned—"standing before God's judgment seat." "No one," she declared, "has so grieved the Holy Spirit"; of that she was quite certain. It was in vain that she prayed to be delivered from vanity and hypocrisy, and she could not bear to smile or to be gay, "because she hated God to hear her laugh, as if she had not repented of her sin."

A weaker spirit would have been overwhelmed by the load of such distresses—would have yielded or snapped. But this extraordinary young woman held firm, and fought her way to victory. With an amazing persistency, during the eight years that followed her rebuff over Salisbury Hospital, she struggled and worked and planned. While superficially she was carrying on the life of a brilliant girl in high society, while internally she was a prey to the tortures of regret and of remorse, she yet possessed the energy to collect the knowledge and to undergo the experience which alone could enable her to do what she had determined she would do in the end. In secret she devoured the reports of medical commissions, the pamphlets of sanitary authorities, the histories of hospitals and homes. She spent the intervals of the London season in ragged schools and workhouses. When she went abroad with her family, she used her spare time so well that there was hardly a great hospital in Europe with which she was not acquainted, hardly a great city whose slums she had not passed through. She managed to spend some days in a convent school in Rome, and some weeks as a "Sœur de Charité" in Paris. Then, while her mother and sister were taking the waters at Carlsbad, she succeeded in slipping off to a nursing institution at Kaiserswerth, where she remained for more than three months. This was the critical event of her life. The experience which she gained as a nurse at Kaiserswerth formed the foundation of all her future action and finally fixed her in her career.

But one other trial awaited her. The allurements of the world she had brushed aside with disdain and loathing; she had resisted the subtler temptation which, in her weariness, had sometimes come upon her, of devoting her baffled energies to art or literature; the last ordeal appeared in the shape of a desirable young man. Hitherto, her lovers had been nothing to her but an added burden and a mockery; but now— For a moment, she wavered. A new feeling swept over her—a feeling which she had never known before, which she was never to know again. The most powerful and the profoundest of all the instincts of humanity laid claim upon her. But it rose before her, that instinct, arrayed—how could it be otherwise?—in the inevitable habiliments of a Victorian marriage; and she had the strength to stamp it underfoot.

I have an intellectual nature which requires satisfaction [she noted], and that would find it in him. I have a passional nature which requires satisfaction, and that would find it in him. I have a moral, an active nature which requires satisfaction, and that would not find it in his life. Sometimes I think that I will satisfy my passional nature at all events. . . .

But no, she knew in her heart that it could not be. "To be nailed to a continuation and exaggeration of my present life . . . to put it out of my power ever to be able to seize the chance of forming for myself a true and rich life"—that would be a suicide. She made her choice, and refused what was at least a certain happiness for a visionary good which might never come to her at all. And so she returned to her old life of waiting and bitterness.

The thoughts and feelings that I have now [she wrote] I can remember since I was six years old. A profession, a trade, a necessary occupation, something to fill and employ all my faculties, I have always felt essential to me, I have always longed for. The first thought I can remember, and the last, was nursing work; and in the absence of this, education work, but more the education of the bad than of the young. . . . Everything has been tried, foreign travel, kind friends, everything. My God! What is to become of me?

A desirable young man? Dust and ashes! What was there desirable in such a thing as that? "In my thirty-first year," she noted in her diary, "I see nothing desirable but death."

Three more years passed, and then at last the pressure of time told; her family seemed to realize that she was old enough and strong enough to have her way; and she became the superintendent of a charitable nursing home in Harley Street. She had gained her independence, though it was in a meagre sphere enough; and her mother was still not quite resigned: surely Florence might at least spend the summer in the country. At times, indeed, among her intimates, Mrs. Nightingale almost wept. "We are ducks," she said with tears in her eyes, "who have hatched a wild swan." But the poor lady was wrong; it was not a swan that they had hatched; it was an eagle.

Miss Nightingale had been a year in her nursing-home in Harley Street, when Fate knocked at the door. The Crimean War broke out; the battle of the Alma was fought; and the terrible condition of our military hospitals at Scutari began to be known in England. It sometimes happens that the plans of Providence are a little difficult to follow, but on this occasion all was plain; there was a perfect co-ordination of events. For years Miss Nightingale had been getting ready; at last she was prepared—experienced, free, mature, yet still young—she was thirty-four—desirous to serve, accustomed to command: at that precise moment the desperate need of a great nation came, and she was there to satisfy it. If the war had fallen a few years earlier, she would have lacked the knowledge, perhaps even the power, for such a work; a few years later and she would, no doubt, have been fixed in the routine of some absorbing task, and, moreover, she would have been growing old. Nor was it only the coincidence of Time that was remarkable. It so fell out that Sidney Herbert was at the War Office and in the Cabinet; and Sidney Herbert was an intimate friend of Miss Nightingale's, convinced, from personal experience in charitable work, of her supreme capacity. After such premises, it seems hardly more than a matter of course that her letter, in which she offered her services for the East, and Sidney Herbert's letter, in which he asked for

them, should actually have crossed in the post. Thus it all happened, without a hitch. The appointment was made, and even Mrs. Nightingale, overawed by the magnitude of the venture, could only approve. A pair of faithful friends offered themselves as personal attendants; thirty-eight nurses were collected; and within a week of the crossing of the letters Miss Nightingale, amid a great burst of popular enthusiasm, left for Constantinople.

Among the numerous letters which she received on her departure was one from Dr. Manning, who at that time was working in comparative obscurity as a Catholic priest in Bayswater. "God will keep you," he wrote, "and my prayer for you will be that your one object of Worship, Pattern of Imitation, and source of consolation and strength may be the Sacred Heart of our Divine Lord."

To what extent Dr. Manning's prayer was answered must remain a matter of doubt; but this much is certain, that, if ever a prayer was needed, it was needed then for Florence Nightingale. For dark as had been the picture of the state of affairs at Scutari, revealed to the English public in the despatches of the *Times* correspondent and in a multitude of private letters, yet the reality turned out to be darker still. What had occurred was, in brief, the complete breakdown of our medical arrangements at the seat of war. The origins of this awful failure were complex and manifold; they stretched back through long years of peace and carelessness in England; they could be traced through endless ramifications of administrative incapacity—from the inherent faults of confused systems to the petty bunglings of minor officials, from the inevitable ignorance of Cabinet Ministers to the fatal exactitudes of narrow routine. In the inquiries which followed it was clearly shown that the evil was in reality that worst of all evils—one which has been caused by nothing in particular and for which no one in particular is to blame. The whole organisation of the war machine was incompetent and out of date. The old Duke had sat for a generation at the Horse Guards repressing innovations with an iron hand. There was an extraordinary overlapping of authorities, an almost incredible shifting of responsibilities to and fro. As for such a notion as the creation and the maintenance of a really adequate medical service for the army—in that atmosphere of aged chaos, how could it have entered anybody's head? Before the war, the easy-going officials at Westminster were naturally persuaded that all was well—or at least as well as could be expected; when someone, for instance, actually had the temerity to suggest the formation of a corps of army nurses, he was at once laughed out of court. When the war had begun, the gallant British officers in control of affairs had other things to think about than the petty details of medical organisation. Who had bothered with such trifles in the Peninsula? And surely, on that occasion, we had done pretty well. Thus the most obvious precautions were neglected, the most necessary preparations put off from day to day. The principal medical officer of the army, Dr. Hall, was summoned from India at a moment's notice, and was unable to visit England before taking up his duties at the front. And it was not until after the battle of the Alma, when we had been at war for

many months, that we acquired hospital accommodations at Scutari for more than a thousand men. Errors, follies, and vices on the part of individuals there doubtless were; but, in the general reckoning, they were of small account—insignificant symptoms of the deep disease of the body politic—the enormous calamity of administrative collapse.

Miss Nightingale arrived at Scutari—a suburb of Constantinople, on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus—on November 4th, 1854; it was ten days after the battle of Balaclava, and the day before the battle of Inkerman. The organisation of the hospitals, which had already given way under the stress of the battle of the Alma, was now to be subjected to the further pressure which these two desperate and bloody engagements implied. Great detachments of wounded were already beginning to pour in. The men, after receiving such summary treatment as could be given them at the smaller hospitals in the Crimea itself, were forthwith shipped in batches of two hundred across the Black Sea to Scutari. This voyage was in normal times one of four days and a half; but the times were no longer normal, and now the transit often lasted for a fortnight or three weeks. It received, not without reason, the name of “the middle passage.” Between, and sometimes on the decks, the wounded, the sick, and the dying were crowded—men who had just undergone the amputation of limbs, men in the clutches of fever or of frostbite, men in the last stages of dysentery and cholera—without beds, sometimes without blankets, often hardly clothed. The one or two surgeons on board did what they could; but medical stores were lacking, and the only form of nursing available was that provided by a handful of invalid soldiers, who were usually themselves prostrate by the end of the voyage. There was no other food besides the ordinary salt rations of ship diet; and even the water was sometimes so stored that it was out of reach of the weak. For many months, the average of deaths during these voyages was seventy-four in the thousand; the corpses were shot out into the waters; and who shall say that they were the most unfortunate? At Scutari, the landing-stage, constructed with all the perverseness of Oriental ingenuity, could only be approached with great difficulty, and, in rough weather, not at all. When it was reached, what remained of the men in the ships had first to be disembarked, and then conveyed up a steep slope of a quarter of a mile to the nearest of the hospitals. The most serious cases might be put upon stretchers—for there were far too few for all; the rest were carried or dragged up the hill by such convalescent soldiers as could be got together, who were not too obviously infirm for the work. At last the journey was accomplished; slowly, one by one, living or dying, the wounded were carried up into the hospital. And in the hospital what did they find?

Lasciate ogni speranza voi ch'entrate the delusive doors bore no such inscription; and yet behind them Hell yawned. Want, neglect, confusion, misery—in every shape and in every degree of intensity—filled the endless corridors and the vast apartments of the gigantic barrack-house, which, without forethought or preparation, had been hurriedly set aside as the chief shelter for the victims of the war. The very building itself was radically defective.

Huge sewers underlay it, and cess-pools loaded with filth wafted their poison into the upper rooms. The floors were in so rotten a condition that many of them could not be scrubbed; the walls were thick with dirt; incredible multitudes of vermin swarmed everywhere. And, enormous as the building was it was yet too small. It contained four miles of beds, crushed together so close that there was but just room to pass between them. Under such conditions, the most elaborate system of ventilation might well have been at fault; but here there was no ventilation. The stench was indescribable. "I have been well acquainted," said Miss Nightingale, "with the dwellings of the worst parts of most of the great cities in Europe, but have never been in any atmosphere which I could compare with that of the Barrack Hospital at night." The structural defects were equalled by the deficiencies in the commonest objects of hospital use. There were not enough bedsteads; the sheets were of canvas, and so coarse that the wounded men recoiled from them, begging to be left in their blankets; there was no bedroom furniture of any kind, and empty beer-bottles were used for candlesticks. There were no basins, no towels, no soap, no brooms, no mops, no trays, no plates; there were neither slippers nor scissors, neither shoebrushes nor blacking; there were no knives or forks or spoons. The supply of fuel was constantly deficient. The cooking arrangements were preposterously inadequate, and the laundry was a farce. As for purely medical materials, the tale was no better. Stretchers, splints, bandages—all were lacking; and so were the most ordinary drugs.

To replace such wants, to struggle against such difficulties, there was a handful of men overburdened by the strain of ceaseless work, bound down by the traditions of official routine, and enfeebled either by old age or inexperience or sheer incompetence. They had proved utterly unequal to their task. The principal doctor was lost in the imbecilities of a senile optimism. The wretched official whose business it was to provide for the wants of the hospital was tied fast hand and foot by red tape. A few of the younger doctors struggled valiantly, but what could they do? Unprepared, disorganised, with such help only as they could find among the miserable band of convalescent soldiers drafted off to tend their sick comrades, they were faced with disease, mutilation, and death in all their most appalling forms, crowded multitudinously about them in an ever-increasing mass. They were like men in a shipwreck, fighting, not for safety, but for the next moment's bare existence—to gain, by yet another frenzied effort, some brief respite from the waters of destruction.

In these surroundings, those who had been long inured to scenes of human suffering—surgeons with a world-wide knowledge of agonies, soldiers familiar with fields of carnage, missionaries with remembrances of famine and of plague—yet found a depth of horror which they had never known before. There were moments, there were places in the Barrack Hospital at Scutari, where the strongest hand was struck with trembling, and the boldest eye would turn away its gaze.

Miss Nightingale came, and she, at any rate, in that Inferno, did not

abandon hope. For one thing, she brought material succour. Before she left London she had consulted Dr. Andrew Smith, the head of the Army Medical Board, as to whether it would be useful to take out stores of any kind to Scutari; and Dr. Andrew Smith had told her that "nothing was needed." Even Sidney Herbert had given her similar assurances; possibly, owing to an oversight, there might have been some delay in the delivery of the medical stores, which, he said, had been sent out from England "in profusion," but "four days would have remedied this." She preferred to trust her own instincts, and at Marseilles purchased a large quantity of miscellaneous provisions, which were of the utmost use at Scutari. She came, too, amply provided with money—in all, during her stay in the East, about £7000 reached her from private sources; and, in addition, she was able to avail herself of another valuable means of help. At the same time as herself, Mr. Macdonald, of the *Times*, had arrived at Scutari, charged with the duty of administering the large sums of money collected through the agency of that newspaper in aid of the sick and wounded; and Mr. Macdonald had the sense to see that the best use he could make of the *Times* Fund was to put it at the disposal of Miss Nightingale.

I cannot conceive [wrote an eye-witness], as I now calmly look back on the first three weeks after the arrival of the wounded from Inkerman, how it could have been possible to have avoided a state of things too disastrous to contemplate, had not Miss Nightingale been there, with the means placed at her disposal by Mr. Macdonald.

But the official view was different. What! Was the public service to admit, by accepting outside charity, that it was unable to discharge its own duties without the assistance of private and irregular benevolence? Never! And accordingly when Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, our Ambassador at Constantinople, was asked by Mr. Macdonald to indicate how the *Times* Fund could best be employed, he answered that there was indeed one object to which it might very well be devoted—the building of an English Protestant Church at Pera.

Mr. Macdonald did not waste further time with Lord Stratford, and immediately joined forces with Miss Nightingale. But, with such a frame of mind in the highest quarters, it is easy to imagine the kind of disgust and alarm with which the sudden intrusion of a band of amateurs and females must have filled the minds of the ordinary officers and the ordinary military surgeon. They could not understand it; what had women to do with war? Honest Colonels relieved their spleen by the cracking of heavy jokes about "the Bird"; while poor Dr. Hall, a rough terrier of a man, who had worried his way to the top of his profession, was struck speechless with astonishment, and at last observed that Miss Nightingale's appointment was extremely droll.

Her position was, indeed, an official one, but it was hardly the easier for that. In the hospitals it was her duty to provide the services of herself and her nurses when they were asked for by the doctors, and not until then. At first some of the surgeons would have nothing to say to her, and, though she was

welcomed by others, the majority were hostile and suspicious. But gradually she gained ground. Her good will could not be denied, and her capacity could not be disregarded. With consummate tact, with all the gentleness of supreme strength, she managed at last to impose her personality upon the susceptible, overwrought, discouraged, and helpless group of men in authority who surrounded her. She stood firm; she was a rock in the angry ocean; with her alone was safety, comfort, life. And so it was that hope dawned at Scutari. The reign of chaos and old night began to dwindle; order came upon the scene, and common sense, and forethought, and decision, radiating out from the little room off the great gallery in the Barrack Hospital where, day and night, the Lady Superintendent was at her task. Progress might be slow, but it was sure. The first sign of a great change came with the appearance of some of those necessary objects with which the hospitals had been unprovided for months. The sick men began to enjoy the use of towels and soap, knives and forks, combs and tooth-brushes. Dr. Hall might snort when he heard of it, asking, with a growl, what a soldier wanted with a tooth-brush; but the good work went on. Eventually the whole business of purveying to the hospitals was, in effect, carried out by Miss Nightingale. She alone, it seemed, whatever the contingency, knew where to lay her hands on what was wanted; she alone could dispense her stores with readiness; above all, she alone possessed the art of circumventing the pernicious influences of official etiquette. This was her greatest enemy, and sometimes even she was baffled by it. On one occasion 27,000 shirts, sent out at her instance by the Home Government, arrived, were landed, and were only waiting to be unpacked. But the official "Purveyor" intervened; "he could not unpack them," he said, "without a Board." Miss Nightingale pleaded in vain; the sick and wounded lay half-naked shivering for want of clothing; and three weeks elapsed before the Board released the shirts. A little later, however, on a similar occasion, Miss Nightingale felt that she could assert her own authority. She ordered a Government consignment to be forcibly opened, while the miserable "Purveyor" stood by, wringing his hands in departmental agony.

Vast quantities of valuable stores sent from England lay, she found, engulfed in the bottomless abyss of the Turkish Customs House. Other shiploads, buried beneath munitions of war destined for Balaclava, passed Scutari without a sign, and thus hospital materials were sometimes carried to and fro three times over the Black Sea, before they reached their destination. The whole system was clearly at fault, and Miss Nightingale suggested to the home authorities that a Government Store House should be instituted at Scutari for the reception and distribution of the consignments. Six months after her arrival this was done.

In the meantime she had reorganised the kitchens and the laundries in the hospitals. The ill-cooked hunks of meat, vilely served at irregular intervals, which had hitherto been the only diet for the sick men, were replaced by punctual meals, well-prepared and appetising, while strengthening extra foods—soups and wines, and jellies ("preposterous luxuries," snarled Dr. Hall)—

were distributed to those who needed them. One thing, however, she could not effect. The separation of the bones from the meat was no part of official cookery: the rule was that the food must be divided into equal portions, and if some of the portions were all bone—well, every man must take his chance. The rule, perhaps, was not a very good one; but there it was. "It would require a new Regulation of the Service," she was told, "to bone the meat." As for the washing arrangements, they were revolutionised. Up to the time of Miss Nightingale's arrival the number of shirts which the authorities had succeeded in washing was seven. The hospital bedding, she found, was "washed" in cold water. She took a Turkish house, had boilers installed, and employed soldiers' wives to do the laundry work. The expenses were defrayed from her own funds and that of the *Times*; and henceforward the sick and wounded had the comfort of clean linen.

Then she turned her attention to their clothing. Owing to military exigencies the greater number of the men had abandoned their kits; their knapsacks were lost forever; they possessed nothing but what was on their persons, and that was usually only fit for speedy destruction. The "Purveyor," of course, pointed out that, according to the regulations, all soldiers should bring with them into hospital an adequate supply of clothing, and he declared that it was no business of his to make good their deficiencies. Apparently, it was the business of Miss Nightingale. She procured socks, boots, and shirts in enormous quantities; she had trousers made, she rigged up dressing-gowns. "The fact is," she told Sidney Herbert, "I am now clothing the British Army."

All at once, word came from the Crimea that a great new contingent of sick and wounded might shortly be expected. Where were they to go? Every available inch in the wards was occupied; the affair was serious and pressing, and the authorities stood aghast. There were some dilapidated rooms in the Barrack Hospital, unfit for human habitation, but Miss Nightingale believed that if measures were promptly taken they might be made capable of accommodating several hundred beds. One of the doctors agreed with her; the rest of the officials were irresolute: it would be a very expensive job, they said; it would involve building; and who could take the responsibility? The proper course was that a representation should be made to the Director-General of the Army Medical Department in London; then the Director-General would apply to the Horse Guards, the Horse Guards would move the Ordnance, the Ordnance would lay the matter before the Treasury, and if the Treasury gave its consent, the work might be correctly carried through, several months after the necessity for it had disappeared. Miss Nightingale, however, had made up her mind, and she persuaded Lord Stratford—or thought she had persuaded him—to give his sanction to the required expenditure. A hundred and twenty-five workmen were immediately engaged, and the work was begun. The workmen struck; whereupon Lord Stratford washed his hands of the whole business. Miss Nightingale engaged two hundred other workmen on her own authority, and paid the bill out of her own resources. The wards were ready by the required date; five hundred sick men were received in them; and all the

utensils, including knives, forks, spoons, cans and towels, were supplied by Miss Nightingale.

This remarkable woman was in truth performing the function of an administrative chief. How had this come about? Was she not in reality merely a nurse? Was it not her duty simply to tend to the sick? And indeed, was it not as a ministering angel, a gentle "lady with a lamp" that she actually impressed the minds of her contemporaries? No doubt that was so; and yet it is no less certain that, as she herself said, the specific business of nursing was "the least important of the functions into which she had been forced." It was clear that in the state of disorganisation into which the hospitals at Scutari had fallen the most pressing, the really vital, need was for something more than nursing; it was for the necessary elements of civilised life—the commonest material objects, the most ordinary cleanliness, the rudimentary habits of order and authority. "Oh, dear Miss Nightingale," said one of her party as they were approaching Constantinople, "when we land, let there be no delays, let us get straight to nursing the poor fellows!" "The strongest will be wanted at the wash-tub," was Miss Nightingale's answer. And it was upon the wash-tub, and all that the wash-tub stood for, that she expended her greatest energies. Yet to say that is perhaps to say too much. For to those who watched her at work among the sick, moving day and night from bed to bed, with that unflinching courage, with that indefatigable vigilance, it seemed as if the concentrated force of an undivided and unparalleled devotion could hardly suffice for that portion of her task alone. Wherever, in those vast wards, suffering was at its worst and the need for help was greatest, there, as if by magic, was Miss Nightingale. Her superhuman equanimity would, at the moment of some ghastly operation, nerve the victim to endure and almost to hope. Her sympathy would assuage the pangs of dying and bring back to those still living something of the forgotten charm of life. Over and over again her untiring efforts rescued those whom the surgeons had abandoned as beyond the possibility of cure. Her mere presence brought with it a strange influence. A passionate idolatry spread among the men: they kissed her shadow as it passed. They did more. "Before she came," said a soldier, "there was, cussin' and swearin', but after that it was as 'oly as a church." The most cherished privilege of the fighting man was abandoned for the sake of Miss Nightingale. In those "lowest sinks of human misery," as she herself put it, she never heard the use of one expression "which could distress a gentlewoman."

She was heroic; and these were the humble tributes paid by those of grosser mould to that high quality. Certainly, she was heroic. Yet her heroism was not of that simple sort so dear to the readers of novels and the compilers of hagiologies—the romantic sentimental heroism with which mankind loves to invest its chosen darlings: it was made of sterner stuff. To the wounded soldier on his couch of agony she might well appear in the guise of a gracious angel of mercy; but the military surgeons, and the orderlies, and her own nurses, and the "Purveyor," and Dr. Hall, and even Lord Stratford himself could tell a different story. It was not by gentle sweetness and womanly self-

abnegation that she had brought order out of chaos in the Scutari Hospitals, that, from her own resources, she had clothed the British Army, that she had spread her dominion over the serried and reluctant powers of the official world; it was by strict method, by stern discipline, by rigid attention to detail, by ceaseless labour, by the fixed determination of an indomitable will. Beneath her cool and calm demeanour lurked fierce and passionate fires. As she passed through the wards in her plain dress, so quiet, so unassuming, she struck the casual observer simply as the pattern of a perfect lady; but the keener eye perceived something more than that—the serenity of high deliberation in the scope of the capacious brow, the sign of power in the dominating curve of the thin nose, and the traces of a harsh and dangerous temper—something peevish, something mocking, and yet something precise—in the small and delicate mouth. There was humour in the face; but the curious watcher might wonder whether it was humour of a very pleasant kind; might ask himself, even as he heard the laughter and marked the jokes with which she cheered the spirits of her patients, what sort of sardonic merriment this same lady might not give vent to, in the privacy of her chamber. As for her voice, it was true of it, even more than her countenance, that it “had that in it one must fain call master.” Those clear tones were in no need of emphasis: “I never heard her raise her voice,” said one of her companions. Only, when she had spoken, it seemed as if nothing could follow but obedience. Once, when she had given some direction, a doctor ventured to remark that the thing could not be done. “But it must be done,” said Miss Nightingale. A chance bystander, who heard the words, never forgot through all his life the irresistible authority of them. And they were spoken quietly—very quietly indeed.

Late at night, when the long miles of beds lay wrapped in darkness, Miss Nightingale would sit at work in her little room, over her correspondence. It was one of the most formidable of all her duties. There were hundreds of letters to be written to the friends and relations of soldiers; there was the enormous mass of official documents to be dealt with; there were her own private letters to be answered; and, most important of all, there was the composition of her long and confidential reports to Sidney Herbert. These were by no means official communications. Her soul, pent up all day in the restraint and reserve of a vast responsibility, now at last poured itself out in these letters with all its natural vehemence, like a swollen torrent through an open sluice. Here, at least, she did not mince matters. Here she painted in her darkest colours the hideous scenes which surrounded her; here she tore away remorselessly the last veils still shrouding the abominable truth. Then she would fill pages with recommendations and suggestions, with criticism of the minutest details of organisation, with elaborate calculations of contingencies, with exhaustive analyses and statistical statements piled up in breathless eagerness one on top of the other. And then her pen, in the virulence of its volubility, would rush on to the discussion of individuals, to the denunciation of an incompetent surgeon or the ridicule of a self-sufficient nurse. Her sarcasm searched the ranks of the officials with the deadly and unsparing precision of a machine-gun.

Her nicknames were terrible. She respected no one: Lord Stratford, Lord Raglan, Lady Stratford, Dr. Andrew Smith, Dr. Hall, the Commissary-General, the Purveyor—she fulminated against them all. The intolerable futility of mankind obsessed her like a nightmare, and she gnashed her teeth against it. "I do well to be angry," was the burden of her cry. How many just men were there at Scutari? How many who cared at all for the sick, or had done anything for their relief? Were there ten? Were there five? Was there even one? She could not be sure.

At one time, during several weeks, her vituperations descended upon the head of Sidney Herbert himself. He had misinterpreted her wishes, he had traversed her positive instructions, and it was not until he had admitted his error and apologised in abject terms that he was allowed again into favour. While this misunderstanding was at its height an aristocratic young gentleman arrived at Scutari with a recommendation from the Minister. He had come out from England filled with a romantic desire to render homage to the angelic heroine of his dreams. He had, he said, cast aside his life of ease and luxury; he would devote his days and nights to the service of that gentle lady; he would perform the most menial offices, he would "fag" for her, he would be her footman—and feel requited by a single smile. A single smile, indeed, he had, but it was of an unexpected kind. Miss Nightingale at first refused to see him, and then, when she consented, believing that he was an emissary sent by Sidney Herbert to put her in the wrong over their dispute, she took notes of her conversation with him, and insisted on his signing them at the end of it. The young gentleman returned to England by the next ship.

This quarrel with Sidney Herbert was, however, an exceptional incident. Alike by him, and by Lord Panmure, his successor at the War Office, she was firmly supported; and the fact that during the whole of her stay at Scutari she had the Home Government at her back, was her trump card in her dealings with the hospital authorities. Nor was it only the Government that was behind her: public opinion in England early recognised the high importance of her mission, and its enthusiastic appreciation of her work soon reached an extraordinary height. The Queen herself was deeply moved. She made repeated inquiries as to the welfare of Miss Nightingale; she asked to see her accounts of the wounded, and made her the intermediary between the throne and the troops.

Let Mrs. Herbert know [she wrote to the War Minister] that I wish Miss Nightingale and the ladies would tell these poor noble, wounded, and sick men that *no one* takes a warmer interest or feels *more* for their sufferings or admires their courage and heroism *more* than their Queen. Day and night she thinks of her beloved troops. So does the Prince. Beg Mrs. Herbert to communicate these last words to those ladies, as I know that *our* sympathy is much valued by these noble fellows.

The letter was read aloud in the wards by the Chaplain. "It is a very feeling letter," said the men.

And so the months passed, and that fell winter which had begun with

Inkerman and had dragged itself out through the long agony of the investment of Sebastopol, at last was over. In May, 1855, after six months of labour, Miss Nightingale could look with something like satisfaction at the condition of the Scutari hospitals. Had they done nothing more than survive the terrible strain which had been put upon them, it would have been a matter for congratulation; but they had done much more than that; they had marvellously improved. The confusion and the pressure in the wards had come to an end; order reigned in them, and cleanliness; the supplies were bountiful and prompt; important sanitary works had been carried out. One simple comparison of figures was enough to reveal the extraordinary change: the rate of mortality among the cases treated had fallen from 42 per cent. to 22 per thousand. But still the indefatigable lady was not satisfied. The main problem had been solved—the physical needs of the men had been provided for; their mental and spiritual needs remained. She set up and furnished reading-rooms and recreation-rooms. She started classes and lectures. Officers were amazed to see her treating their men as if they were human beings, and assured her that she would only end by “spoiling the brutes.” But that was not Miss Nightingale’s opinion, and she was justified. The private soldier began to drink less, and even—though that seemed impossible—to save his pay. Miss Nightingale became a banker for the army, receiving and sending home large sums of money every month. At last, reluctantly, the Government followed suit, and established machinery of its own for the remission of money. Lord Panmure, however, remained sceptical; “It will do no good,” he pronounced; “the British soldier is not a remitting animal.” But, in fact, during the next six months, £71,000 was sent home.

Amid all these activities, Miss Nightingale took up the further task of inspecting the hospitals in the Crimea itself. The labour was extreme, and the conditions of life were almost intolerable. She spent whole days in the saddle, or was driven over those bleak and rocky heights in a baggage cart. Sometimes she stood for hours in the heavily falling snow, and would only reach her hut at dead of night after walking for miles through perilous ravines. Her powers of resistance seemed incredible, but at last they were exhausted. She was attacked by fever, and for a moment came very near to death. Yet she worked on; if she could not move, she could at least write; and write she did until her mind had left her; and after it had left her, in what seemed the delirious trance of death itself, she still wrote. When, after many weeks, she was strong enough to travel, she was to return to England, but she utterly refused. She would not go back, she said, before the last of the soldiers had left Scutari.

This happy moment had almost arrived, when suddenly the smouldering hostilities of the medical authorities burst out into a flame. Dr. Hall’s labours had been rewarded by a K.C.B.—letters which, as Miss Nightingale told Sidney Herbert, she could only suppose to mean “Knight of the Crimean Burial-grounds”—and the honour had turned his head. He was Sir John, and he would be thwarted no longer. Disputes had lately arisen between Miss Nightingale and some of the nurses in the Crimean hospitals. The situation

had been embittered by rumours of religious disensions, for, while the Crimean nurses were Roman Catholics, many of those at Scutari were suspected of a regrettable propensity towards the tenets of Dr. Pusey. Miss Nightingale was by no means disturbed by these sectarian differences, but any suggestion that her supreme authority over all the nurses with the Army was in doubt was enough to rouse her to fury; and it appeared that Mrs. Bridgeman, the Reverend Mother in the Crimea, had ventured to call that authority in question. Sir John Hall thought that his opportunity had come, and strongly supported Mrs. Bridgeman—or, as Miss Nightingale preferred to call her, the “Reverend Brickbat.” There was a violent struggle; Miss Nightingale’s rage was terrible. Dr. Hall, she declared, was doing his best to “root her out of the Crimea.” She would bear it no longer; the War Office was playing her false; there was only one thing to be done—Sidney Herbert must move for the production of papers in the House of Commons, so that the public might be able to judge between her and her enemies. Sidney Herbert with great difficulty calmed her down. Orders were immediately dispatched putting her supremacy beyond doubt, and the Reverend Brickbat withdrew from the scene. Sir John, however, was more tenacious. A few weeks later, Miss Nightingale and her nurses visited the Crimea for the last time, and the brilliant idea occurred to him that he could crush her by a very simple expedient—he would starve her into submission; and he actually ordered that no rations of any kind should be supplied to her. He had already tried this plan with great effect upon an unfortunate medical man whose presence in the Crimea he had considered an intrusion; but he was now to learn that such tricks were thrown away upon Miss Nightingale. With extraordinary foresight, she had brought with her a great supply of food; she succeeded in obtaining more at her own expense and by her own exertions; and thus for ten days, in that inhospitable country, she was able to feed herself and twenty-four nurses. Eventually the military authorities intervened in her favour, and Sir John had to confess that he was beaten.

It was not until July, 1856—four months after the Declaration of Peace—that Miss Nightingale left Scutari for England. Her reputation was now enormous, and the enthusiasm of the public was unbounded. The Royal approbation was expressed by the gift of a brooch, accompanied by a private letter.

You are, I know, well aware [wrote Her Majesty] of the high sense I entertain of the Christian devotion which you have displayed during this great and bloody war, and I need hardly repeat to you how warm my admiration is for your services, which are fully equal to those of my dear and brave soldiers, whose sufferings you have had the *privilege* of alleviating in so merciful a manner. I am, however, anxious of marking my feelings in a manner which I trust will be agreeable to you, and therefore send you with this letter a brooch, the form and emblems of which commemorate your great and blessed work, and which I hope you will wear as a mark of the high approbation of your Sovereign!

“It will be a very great satisfaction to me,” Her Majesty added, “to make the acquaintance of one who has set so bright an example to our sex.”

The brooch, which was designed by the Prince Consort, bore a St. George's cross in red enamel, and the Royal cypher surmounted by diamonds. The whole was encircled by the inscription, "Blessed are the Merciful."

The name of Florence Nightingale lives in the memory of the world by virtue of the lurid and heroic adventure of the Crimea. Had she died—as she nearly did—upon her return to England, her reputation would hardly have been different; her legend would have come down to us almost as we know it to-day—that gentle vision of female virtue which first took shape before the adoring eyes of the sick soldiers at Scutari. Yet, as a matter of fact, she lived for more than half a century after the Crimean War; and during the greater part of that long period all the energy and all the devotion of her extraordinary nature were working at their highest pitch. What she accomplished in those years of unknown labour could, indeed, hardly have been more glorious than her Crimean triumphs; but it was certainly more important. The true history was far stranger even than the myth. In Miss Nightingale's own eyes the adventure of the Crimea was a mere incident—scarcely more than a useful stepping-stone in her career. It was the fulcrum with which she hoped to move the world; but it was only the fulcrum. For more than a generation she was to sit in secret, working her lever: and her real life began at the very moment when, in the popular imagination, it had ended.

She arrived in England in a shattered state of health. The hardships and the ceaseless effort of the last two years had undermined her nervous system; her heart was pronounced to be affected; she suffered constantly from fainting-fits and terrible attacks of utter physical prostration. The doctors declared that one thing alone would save her—a complete and prolonged rest. But that was also the one thing with which she would have nothing to do. She had never been in the habit of resting; why should she begin now? Now, when her opportunity had come at last; now, when the iron was hot, and it was time to strike? No; she had work to do; and, come what might, she would do it. The doctors protested in vain; in vain her family lamented and entreated, in vain her friends pointed out to her the madness of such a course. Madness? Mad—possessed—perhaps she was. A demoniac frenzy had seized upon her. As she lay upon her sofa, gasping, she devoured blue-books, dictated letters, and, in the intervals of her palpitations, cracked her febrile jokes. For months at a stretch she never left her bed. For years she was in daily expectation of Death. But she would not rest. At this rate, the doctors assured her, even if she did not die, she would become an invalid for life. She could not help that; there was the work to be done; and, as for rest, very likely she might rest . . . when she had done it.

Wherever she went, in London or in the country, in the hills of Derbyshire, or among the rhododendrons at Embley, she was haunted by a ghost. It was the spectre of Scutari—the hideous vision of the organisation of a military hospital. She would lay that phantom, or she would perish. The whole system of the Army Medical Department, the education of the Medical Officer,

the regulations of hospital procedure . . . *rest*? How could she rest while these things were as they were, while, if the like necessity were to arise again, the like results would follow? And, even in peace and at home, what was the sanitary condition of the Army? The mortality in the barracks was, she found, nearly double the mortality in civil life. "You might as well take 1100 men every year out upon Salisbury Plain and shoot them," she said. After inspecting the hospitals at Chatham, she smiled grimly. "Yes, this is one more symptom of the system which, in the Crimea, put to death 16,000 men." Scutari had given her knowledge; and it had given her power too: her enormous reputation was at her back—an incalculable force. Other works, other duties, might lie before her; but the most urgent, the most obvious of all was to look to the health of the Army.

One of her very first steps was to take advantage of the invitation which Queen Victoria had sent her to the Crimea, together with the commemorative brooch. Within a few weeks of her return, she visited Balmoral, and had several interviews both with the Queen and the Prince Consort. "She put before us," wrote the Prince in his diary, "all the defects of our present military hospital system and the reforms that are needed." She related the whole story of her experiences in the East; and, in addition, she managed to have some long and confidential talks with His Royal Highness on metaphysics and religion. The impression which she created was excellent. "Sie gefällt uns sehr," noted the Prince, "ist sehr bescheiden." Her Majesty's comment was different—"Such a *head*! I wish we had her at the War Office."

But Miss Nightingale was not at the War Office, and for a very simple reason: she was a woman. Lord Panmure, however, *was* (though indeed the reason for that was not quite so simple); and it was upon Lord Panmure that the issue of Miss Nightingale's efforts for reform must primarily depend. That burly Scottish nobleman had not, in spite of his most earnest endeavours, had a very easy time of it as Secretary of State for War. He had come into office in the middle of the Sebastopol campaign, and had felt himself very well fitted for the position, since he had acquired in former days an inside knowledge of the Army—as a Captain of Hussars. It was this inside knowledge which had enabled him to inform Miss Nightingale with such authority that "the British soldier is not a remitting animal." And perhaps it was this same consciousness of a command of his subject which had impelled him to write a dispatch to Lord Raglan, blandly informing the Commander-in-Chief in the Field just how he was neglecting his duties, and pointing out to him that if he would only try he really might do a little better next time. Lord Raglan's reply, calculated as it was to make its recipient sink into the earth, did not quite have that effect upon Lord Panmure, who, whatever might have been his faults, had never been accused of being supersensitive. However, he allowed the matter to drop; and a little later Lord Raglan died—worn out, some people said, by work and anxiety. He was succeeded by an excellent red-nosed old gentleman, General Simpson, whom nobody had ever heard of, and who took Sebastopol. But Lord Panmure's relations with him were hardly more satis-

factory than his relations with Lord Raglan; for, while Lord Raglan had been too independent, poor General Simpson erred in the opposite direction, perpetually asked advice, suffered from lumbago, doubted, his nose growing daily redder and redder, whether he was fit for his post, and, by alternate mails, sent in and withdrew his resignation. Then, too, both the General and the Minister suffered acutely from that distressingly useful new invention, the electric telegraph. On one occasion General Simpson felt obliged actually to expostulate.

I think, my Lord [he wrote], that some telegraphic messages reach us that cannot be sent under due authority, and are perhaps unknown to you, although under the protection of your Lordship's name. For instance, I was called up last night, a dragoon having come express with a telegraphic message in these words, "Lord Panmure to General Simpson—Captain Jarvis has been bitten by a centipede. How is he now?"

General Simpson might have put up with this, though to be sure it did seem "rather too trifling an affair to call for a dragoon to ride a couple of miles in the dark that he may knock up the Commander of the Army out of the very small allowance of sleep permitted him"; but what was really more than he could bear was to find "upon sending in the morning another mounted dragoon to inquire after Captain Jarvis, four miles off, that he never has been bitten at all, but has had a boil, from which he is fast recovering." But Lord Panmure had troubles of his own. His favourite nephew, Captain Dowbiggan, was at the front, and to one of his telegrams to the Commander-in-Chief the Minister had taken occasion to append the following carefully qualified sentence—"I recommend Dowbiggan to your notice, should you have a vacancy, and if he is fit." Unfortunately, in those early days, it was left to the discretion of the telegraphist to compress the messages which passed through his hands; so that the result was that Lord Panmure's delicate appeal reached its destination in the laconic form of "Look after Dowb." The Headquarters Staff were at first extremely puzzled; they were at last extremely amused. The story spread; and "Look after Dowb" remained for many years the familiar formula for describing official hints in favour of deserving nephews.

And now that all this was over, now that Sebastopol had been, somehow or another, taken; now that peace was, somehow or another, made; now that the troubles of office might surely be expected to be at an end at last—here was Miss Nightingale breaking in upon the scene, with her talk about the state of the hospitals and the necessity for sanitary reform. It was most irksome; and Lord Panmure almost began to wish that he was engaged upon some more congenial occupation—discussing, perhaps, the constitution of the Free Church of Scotland—a question in which he was profoundly interested. But no; duty was paramount; and he set himself, with a sigh of resignation, to the task of doing as little of it as he possibly could.

"The Bison" his friends called him; and the name fitted both his physical demeanour and his habit of mind. That large low head seemed to have been created for butting rather than for anything else. There he stood, four-square

and menacing, in the doorway of reform; and it remained to be seen whether the bulky mass, upon whose solid hide even the barbed arrows of Lord Raglan's scorn had made no mark, would prove amenable to the pressure of Miss Nightingale. Nor was he alone in the doorway. There loomed behind him the whole phalanx of professional conservatism, the stubborn supporters of the out-of-date, the worshippers and the victims of War Office routine. Among these it was only natural that Dr. Andrew Smith, the head of the Army Medical Department, should have been pre-eminent—Dr. Andrew Smith, who had assured Miss Nightingale before she left England that "nothing was wanted at Scutari." Such were her opponents; but she too was not without allies. She had gained the ear of Royalty—which was something; at any moment that she pleased she could gain the ear of the public—which was a great deal. She had a host of admirers and friends; and—to say nothing of her personal qualities—her knowledge, her tenacity, her tact—she possessed, too, one advantage which then, far more even than now, carried an immense weight—she belonged to the highest circle of society. She moved naturally among Peers and Cabinet Ministers—she was one of their own set; and in those days their set was a very narrow one. What kind of attention would such persons have paid to some middle-class woman with whom they were not acquainted, who possessed great experience of army nursing and had decided views upon hospital reform? They would have politely ignored her; but it was impossible to ignore Flo Nightingale. When she spoke, they were obliged to listen; and, when they had once begun to do that—what might not follow? She knew her power, and she used it. She supported her weightiest minutes with familiar witty little notes. The Bison began to look grave. It might be difficult—it might be damned difficult—to put down one's head against the white hand of a lady.

Of Miss Nightingale's friends, the most important was Sidney Herbert. He was a man upon whom the good fairies seemed to have showered, as he lay in his cradle, all their most enviable gifts. Well born, handsome, rich, the master of Wilton—one of those great country-houses, clothed with the glamour of a historic past, which are the peculiar glory of England—he possessed, besides all these advantages, so charming, so lively, so gentle a disposition that no one who had once come near him could ever be his enemy. He was, in fact, a man of whom it was difficult not to say that he was a perfect English gentleman. For his virtues were equal even to his good fortune. He was religious—deeply religious: "I am more and more convinced every day," he wrote, when he had been for some years a Cabinet Minister, "that in politics, as in everything else, nothing can be right which is not in accordance with the spirit of the Gospel." No one was more unselfish; he was charitable and benevolent to a remarkable degree; and he devoted the whole of his life with an unwavering conscientiousness to the public service. With such a character, with such opportunities, what high hopes must have danced before him, what radiant visions of accomplished duties, of ever-increasing usefulness, of beneficent power, of the consciousness of disinterested success! Some of those hopes and visions were, indeed, realised; but, in the end, the career of Sidney Herbert seemed to

show that, with all their generosity, there was some gift or other—what was it?—some essential gift—which the good fairies had withheld, and that even the qualities of a perfect English gentleman may be no safeguard against anguish, humiliation, and defeat.

That career would certainly have been very different if he had never known Miss Nightingale. The alliance between them, which had begun with her appointment to Scutari, which had grown closer and closer while the war lasted, developed, after her return, into one of the most extraordinary of friendships. It was the friendship of a man and a woman intimately bound together by their devotion to a public cause; mutual affection, of course, played a part in it, but it was an incidental part; the whole soul of the relationship was a community of work. Perhaps out of England such an intimacy could hardly have existed—an intimacy so utterly untinctured not only by passion itself but by the suspicion of it. For years Sidney Herbert saw Miss Nightingale almost daily, for long hours together, corresponding with her incessantly when they were apart; and the tongue of scandal was silent; and one of the most devoted of her admirers was his wife. But what made the connection still more remarkable was the way in which the parts that were played in it were divided between the two. The man who acts, decides, and achieves; the woman who encourages, applauds, and—from a distance—inspires:—the combination is common enough; but Miss Nightingale was neither an Aspasia nor an Egeria. In her case it is almost true to say that the rôles were reversed; the qualities of pliancy and sympathy fell to the man, those of command and initiative to the woman. There was one thing only which Miss Nightingale lacked in her equipment for public life; she had not—she never could have—the public power and authority which belong to the successful politician. That power and authority Sidney Herbert possessed; the fact was obvious, and the conclusion no less so: it was through the man that the woman must work her will. She took hold of him, taught him, shaped him, absorbed him, dominated him through and through. He did not resist—he did not wish to resist; his natural inclination lay along the same path as hers; only that terrific personality swept him forward at her own fierce pace and with her own relentless stride. Swept him—where to? Ah! Why had he ever known Miss Nightingale? If Lord Panmure was a bison, Sidney Herbert, no doubt, was a stag—a comely, gallant creature springing through the forest; but the forest is a dangerous place. One has the image of those wide eyes fascinated suddenly by something feline, something strong; there is a pause; and then the tigress has her claws in the quivering haunches; and then—!

Besides Sidney Herbert, she had other friends who, in a more restricted sphere, were hardly less essential to her. If, in her condition of bodily collapse, she were to accomplish what she was determined that she should accomplish, the attentions and the services of others would be absolutely indispensable. Helpers and servers she must have; and accordingly there was soon formed about her a little group of devoted disciples upon whose affections and energies she could implicitly rely. Devoted, indeed, these disciples were, in no ordinary

sense of the term; for certainly she was no light task-mistress, and he who set out to be of use to Miss Nightingale was apt to find, before he had gone very far, that he was in truth being made use of in good earnest—to the very limit of his endurance and his capacity. Perhaps, even beyond those limits; why not? Was she asking of others more than she was giving herself? Let them look at her lying there pale and breathless on the couch; could it be said that she spared herself? Why, then, should she spare others? And it was not for her own sake that she made these claims. For her own sake, indeed! No! They all knew it! it was for the sake of the work. And so the little band, bound body and soul in that strange servitude, laboured on ungrudgingly. Among the most faithful was her “Aunt Mai,” her father’s sister, who from the earliest days had stood beside her, who had helped her to escape from the thralldom of family life, who had been with her at Scutari, and who now acted almost the part of mother to her, watching over her with infinite care in all the movements and uncertainties which her state of health involved. Another constant attendant was her brother-in-law, Sir Harry Verney, whom she found particularly valuable in parliamentary affairs. Arthur Clough, the poet, also a connection by marriage, she used in other ways. Ever since he had lost his faith at the time of the Oxford Movement, Clough had passed his life in a condition of considerable uneasiness, which was increased rather than diminished by the practice of poetry. Unable to decide upon the purpose of an existence whose savour had fled together with his belief in the Resurrection, his spirits lowered still further by ill-health, and his income not all that it should be, he had determined to seek the solution of his difficulties in the United States of America. But, even there, the solution was not forthcoming; and when, a little later, he was offered a post in a government department at home, he accepted it, came to live in London, and immediately fell under the influence of Miss Nightingale. Though the purpose of existence might be still uncertain and its nature still unsavoury, here, at any rate, under the eye of this inspired woman, was something real, something earnest: his only doubt was—could he be of any use? Certainly he could. There were a great number of miscellaneous little jobs which there was nobody handy to do. For instance, when Miss Nightingale was travelling, there were the railway-tickets to be taken; and there were proof-sheets to be corrected; and then there were parcels to be done up in brown paper, and carried to the post. Certainly he could be useful. And so, upon such occupations as these, Arthur Clough was set to work. “This that I see, is not all,” he comforted himself by reflecting, “and this that I do is but little! nevertheless it is good, though there is better than it.”

As time went on, her “Cabinet,” as she called it, grew larger. Officials with whom her work brought her into touch and who sympathised with her objects, were pressed into her service; and old friends of the Crimean days gathered round her when they returned to England. Among these the most indefatigable was Dr. Sutherland, a sanitary expert, who for more than thirty years acted as her confidential private secretary, and surrendered to her purposes

literally the whole of his life. Thus sustained and assisted, thus slaved for and adored, she prepared to beard the Bison.

Two facts soon emerged, and all that followed turned upon them. It became clear, in the first place, that that imposing mass was not immovable, and, in the second, that its movement, when it did move, would be exceedingly slow. The Bison was no match for the lady. It was in vain that he put down his head and planted his feet in the earth; he could not withstand her; the white hand forced him back. But the process was an extraordinarily gradual one. Dr. Andrew Smith and all his War Office phalanx stood behind, blocking the way; the poor Bison groaned inwardly, and cast a wistful eye towards the happy pastures of the Free Church of Scotland; then slowly, with infinite reluctance, step by step, he retreated, disputing every inch of the ground.

The first great measure, which, supported as it was by the Queen, the Cabinet, and the united opinion of the country, it was impossible to resist, was the appointment of a Royal Commission to report upon the health of the Army. The question of the composition of the Commission then immediately arose; and it was over this matter that the first hand-to-hand encounter between Lord Panmure and Miss Nightingale took place. They met, and Miss Nightingale was victorious; Sidney Herbert was appointed Chairman; and, in the end the only member of the Commission opposed to her views was Dr. Andrew Smith. During the interview, Miss Nightingale made an important discovery: she found that "the Bison was bullyable"—the hide was the hide of a Mexican buffalo, but the spirit was the spirit of an Alderney calf. And there was one thing above all others which the huge creature dreaded—an appeal to public opinion. The faintest hint of such a terrible eventuality made his heart dissolve within him; he would agree to anything—he would cut short his grouse-shooting—he would make a speech in the House of Lords—he would even overrule Dr. Andrew Smith—rather than that. Miss Nightingale held the fearful threat in reserve—she would speak out what she knew; she would publish the truth to the whole world, and let the whole world judge between them. With supreme skill, she kept this sword of Damocles poised above the Bison's head, and more than once she was actually on the point of really dropping it. For his recalcitrancy grew and grew. The *personnel* of the Commission once determined upon, there was a struggle, which lasted for six months, over the nature of its powers. Was it to be an efficient body, armed with the right of full inquiry and wide examination, or was it to be a polite official contrivance for exonerating Dr. Andrew Smith? The War Office phalanx closed its ranks, and fought tooth and nail; but it was defeated: the Bison was bullyable.

Three months from this day [Miss Nightingale had written at last] I publish my experience of the Crimean Campaign, and my suggestions for improvement, unless there has been a fair and tangible pledge by that time for reform.

Who could face that?

And, if the need came, she meant to be as good as her word. For she had now determined, whatever might be the fate of the Commission, to draw up

her own report upon the questions at issue. The labour involved was enormous; her health was almost desperate; but she did not flinch, and after six months of incredible industry she had put together and written with her own hand her "Notes affecting the Health, Efficiency, and Hospital Administration of the British Army." This extraordinary composition, filling more than eight hundred closely printed pages, laying down vast principles of far-reaching reform, discussing the minutest details of a multitude of controversial subjects, containing an enormous mass of information of the most varied kinds—military, statistical, sanitary, architectural—was never given to the public, for the need never came; but it formed the basis of the Report of the Royal Commission; and it remains to this day the leading authority on the medical administration of armies.

Before it had been completed the struggle over the powers of the Commission had been brought to a victorious close. Lord Panmure had given way once more; he had immediately hurried to the Queen to obtain her consent; and only then, when her Majesty's initials had been irrevocably affixed to the fatal document, did he dare to tell Dr. Andrew Smith what he had done. The Commission met, and another immense load fell upon Miss Nightingale's shoulders. To-day she would, of course, have been one of the Commission herself; but at that time the idea of a woman appearing in such a capacity was unheard of; and no one even suggested the possibility of Miss Nightingale's doing so. The result was that she was obliged to remain behind the scenes throughout, to coach Sidney Herbert in private at every important juncture, and to convey to him and to her other friends upon the Commission the vast funds of her expert knowledge—so essential in the examination of witnesses—by means of innumerable consultations, letters, and memoranda. It was even doubtful whether the proprieties would admit of her giving evidence; and at last as a compromise, her modesty only allowed her to do so in the form of written answers to written questions. At length the grand affair was finished. The Commission's Report, embodying almost word for word the suggestions of Miss Nightingale, was drawn up by Sidney Herbert. Only one question remained to be answered—would anything, after all, be done? Or would the Royal Commission, like so many other Royal Commissions before and since, turn out to have achieved nothing but the concoction of a very fat blue-book on a very high shelf?

And so the last and the deadliest struggle with the Bison began. Six months had been spent in coercing him into granting the Commission effective powers; six more months were occupied by the work of the Commission; and now yet another six were to pass in extorting from him the means whereby the recommendations of the Commission might be actually carried out. But, in the end, the thing was done. Miss Nightingale seemed indeed, during these months, to be upon the very brink of death. Accompanied by the faithful Aunt Mai, she moved from place to place—to Hampstead, to Highgate, to Derbyshire, to Malvern—in what appeared to be a last desperate effort to find

health somewhere; but she carried that with her which made health impossible. Her desire for work could now scarcely be distinguished from mania. At one moment she was writing a "last letter" to Sidney Herbert; at the next she was offering to go out to India to nurse the sufferers in the Mutiny. When Dr. Sutherland wrote, imploring her to take a holiday, she raved. Rest!—

I am lying without my head, without my claws, and you all peck at me. It is *de rigueur*, *d'obligation*, like the saying something to one's hat, when one goes into church, to say to me all that has been said to me 110 times a day during the last three months. It is the *obbligo* on the violin, and the twelve violins all practise it together, like the clocks striking 12 o'clock at night all over London, till I say like Xavier de Maistre, *Assez, je le sais, je ne le sais que trop*. I am not a penitent; but you are like the R. C. confessor, who says what is *de rigueur*. . . .

Her wits began to turn, and there was no holding her. She worked like a slave in a mine. She began to believe, as she had begun to believe at Scutari, that none of her fellow-workers had their hearts in the business; if they had, why did they not work as she did? She could only see slackness and stupidity around her. Dr. Sutherland, of course, was grotesquely muddle-headed; and Arthur Clough incurably lazy. Even Sidney Herbert . . . oh yes, he had simplicity and candour and quickness of perception, no doubt; but he was an eclectic; and what could one hope for from a man who went away to fish in Ireland just when the Bison most needed bullying? As for the Bison himself he had fled to Scotland, where he remained buried for many months. The fate of the vital recommendation in the Commission's Report—the appointment of four Sub-Commissions charged with the duty of determining upon the details of the proposed reforms and of putting them into execution—still hung in the balance. The Bison consented to everything; and then, on a flying visit to London, withdrew his consent and hastily returned to Scotland. Then for many weeks all business was suspended; he had gout—gout in the hands, so that he could not write. "His gout was always handy," remarked Miss Nightingale. But eventually it was clear even to the Bison that the game was up, and the inevitable surrender came.

There was, however, one point in which he triumphed over Miss Nightingale. The building of Netley Hospital had been begun, under his orders, before her return to England. Soon after her arrival she examined the plans, and found that they reproduced all the worst faults of an out-of-date and mischievous system of hospital construction. She therefore urged that the matter should be reconsidered, and in the meantime building stopped. But the Bison was obdurate; it would be very expensive, and in any case it was too late. Unable to make any impression on him, and convinced of the extreme importance of the question, she determined to appeal to a higher authority. Lord Palmerston was Prime Minister; she had known him from her childhood; he was a near neighbour of her father's in the New Forest. She went down to the New Forest, armed with the plans of the proposed hospital and all the relevant information, stayed the night at Lord Palmerston's house, and convinced him of the necessity of rebuilding Netley.

It seems to me [Lord Palmerston wrote to Lord Panmure] that at Netley all consideration of what would best tend to the comfort and recovery of the patients has been sacrificed to the vanity of the architect, whose sole object has been to make a building which should cut a dash when looked at from the Southampton river. . . . Pray, therefore, stop all further progress in the work until the matter can be duly considered.

But the Bison was not to be moved by one peremptory letter, even if it was from the Prime Minister. He put forth all his powers of procrastination, Lord Palmerston lost interest in the subject, and so the chief military hospital in England was triumphantly completed on unsanitary principles, with unventilated rooms, and with all the patients' windows facing northeast.

But now the time had come when the Bison was to trouble and to be troubled no more. A vote in the House of Commons brought about the fall of Lord Palmerston's Government, and Lord Panmure found himself at liberty to devote the rest of his life to the Free Church of Scotland. After a brief interval, Sidney Herbert became Secretary of State for War. Great was the jubilation in the Nightingale Cabinet; the day of achievement had dawned at last. The next two and a half years (1859-61) saw the introduction of the whole system of reforms for which Miss Nightingale had been struggling so fiercely—reforms which make Sidney Herbert's tenure of power at the War Office an important epoch in the history of the British Army. The four Sub-Commissions, firmly established under the immediate control of the Minister, and urged forward by the relentless perseverance of Miss Nightingale, set to work with a will. The barracks and the hospitals were remodelled; they were properly ventilated and warmed and lighted for the first time; they were given a water supply which actually supplied water, and kitchens where, strange to say, it was possible to cook. Then the great question of the Purveyor—that portentous functionary whose powers and whose lack of powers had weighed like a nightmare upon Scutari—was taken in hand, and new regulations were laid down, accurately defining his responsibilities and his duties. One Sub-Commission reorganised the medical statistics of the Army. Another established—in spite of the last convulsive efforts of the Department—an Army Medical School. Finally the Army Medical Department itself was completely reorganised; an administrative code was drawn up; and the great and novel principle was established that it was as much a part of the duty of the authorities to look after the soldier's health as to look after his sickness. Besides this, it was at last officially admitted that he had a moral and intellectual side. Coffee-rooms and reading-rooms, gymnasiums and workshops were instituted. A new era did in truth appear to have begun. Already by 1861 the mortality in the Army had decreased by one half since the days of the Crimea. It was no wonder that even vaster possibilities began now to open out before Miss Nightingale. One thing was still needed to complete and to assure her triumphs. The Army Medical Department was indeed reorganised; but the great central machine was still untouched. The War Office itself—! If she could remould *that* nearer to her heart's desire—there indeed would be a victory! And until

that final act was accomplished, how could she be certain that all the rest of her achievements might not, by some capricious turn of Fortune's wheel—a change of Ministry, perhaps, replacing Sidney Herbert by some puppet of the permanent official gang—be swept to limbo in a moment?

Meanwhile, still ravenous for more and yet more work, her activities had branched out into new directions. The army in India claimed her attention. A Sanitary Commission, appointed at her suggestion, and working under her auspices, did for our troops there what the four Sub-Commissions were doing for those at home. At the same time, these very years which saw her laying the foundations of the whole modern system of medical work in the army, saw her also beginning to bring her knowledge, her influence, and her activity into the service of the country at large. Her *Notes on Hospitals* (1859) revolutionised the theory of hospital construction and hospital management. She was immediately recognised as the leading expert upon all the questions involved; her advice flowed unceasingly and in all directions, so that there is no great hospital to-day which does not bear upon it the impress of her mind. Nor was this all. With the opening of the Nightingale Training School for Nurses at St. Thomas's Hospital (1860), she became the founder of modern nursing.

But a terrible crisis was now fast approaching. Sidney Herbert had consented to undertake the root and branch reform of the War Office. He had sallied forth into that tropical jungle of festooned obstructiveness, of inter-twisted irresponsibilities, of crouching prejudices, of abuses grown stiff and rigid with antiquity, which for so many years to come was destined to lure reforming ministers to their doom.

The War Office [said Miss Nightingale] is a very slow office, an enormously expensive office, and one in which the Minister's intentions can be entirely negatived by all his sub-departments, and those of each of the sub-departments by every other.

It was true; and, of course, at the first rumour of a change, the old phalanx of reaction was bristling with its accustomed spears. At its head stood no longer Dr. Andrew Smith, who, some time since, had followed the Bison into outer darkness, but a yet more formidable figure, the permanent Under-Secretary himself, Sir Benjamin Hawes—Ben Hawes the Nightingale Cabinet irreverently dubbed him—a man remarkable even among civil servants for adroitness in baffling inconvenient inquiries, resource in raising false issues, and, in short, a consummate command of all the arts of officially sticking in the mud. "Our scheme will probably result in Ben Hawes's resignation," Miss Nightingale said; "and that is another of its advantages." Ben Hawes himself, however, did not quite see it in that light. He set himself to resist the wishes of the Minister by every means in his power. The struggle was long and desperate; and, as it proceeded, it gradually became evident to Miss Nightingale that something was the matter with Sidney Herbert. What was it? His health, never very strong, was, he said, in danger of collapsing under the strain of his work. But, after all, what is illness, when there is a War Office to be reorganised? Then he began to talk of retiring altogether from public life. The

doctors were consulted, and declared that, above all things, what was necessary was rest. Rest! She grew seriously alarmed. Was it possible that, at the last moment, the crowning wreath of victory was to be snatched from her grasp? She was not to be put aside by doctors; they were talking nonsense; the necessary thing was not rest but the reform of the War Office; and, besides, she knew very well from her own case what one could do even when one was on the point of death. She expostulated vehemently, passionately: the goal was so near, so very near; he could not turn back now! At any rate, he could not resist Miss Nightingale. A compromise was arranged. Very reluctantly, he exchanged the turmoil of the House of Commons for the dignity of the House of Lords, and he remained at the War Office. She was delighted. "One fight more, the best and the last," she said.

For several more months the fight did indeed go on. But the strain upon him was greater even than she perhaps could realise. Besides the intestine war in his office, he had to face a constant battle in the Cabinet with Mr. Gladstone—a more redoubtable antagonist even than Ben Hawes—over the estimates. His health grew worse and worse. He was attacked by fainting-fits; and there were some days when he could only just keep himself going by gulps of brandy. Miss Nightingale spurred him forward with her encouragements and her admonitions, her zeal and her example. But at last his spirit began to sink as well as his body. He could no longer hope; he could no longer desire; it was useless, all useless; it was utterly impossible. He had failed. The dreadful moment came when the truth was forced upon him: he would never be able to reform the War Office. But a yet more dreadful moment lay behind; he must go to Miss Nightingale and tell her that he was a failure, a beaten man.

Blessed are the merciful! What strange ironic prescience had led Prince Albert, in the simplicity of his heart, to choose that motto for the Crimean brooch? The words hold a double lesson; and, alas! when she brought herself to realise at length what was indeed the fact and what there was no helping, it was not in mercy that she turned upon her old friend.

Beaten! [she exclaimed]. Can't you see that you've simply thrown away the game? And with all the winning cards in your hands! And so noble a game! Sidney Herbert beaten! And beaten by Ben Hawes! It is a worse disgrace. . . . [her full rage burst out at last] . . . a worse disgrace than the hospitals at Scutari.

He dragged himself away from her, dragged himself to Spa, hoping vainly for a return of health, and then, despairing, back again to England, to Wilton, to the majestic house standing there resplendent in the summer sunshine, among the great cedars which had lent their shade to Sir Philip Sidney, and all those familiar, darling haunts of beauty which he loved, each one of them, "as if they were persons"; and at Wilton he died. After having received the Eucharist he had become perfectly calm; then, almost unconscious, his lips were seen to be moving. Those about him bent down. "Poor Florence! Poor Florence!" they just caught. ". . . Our joint work . . . unfinished . . . tried to do . . ." and they could hear no more.

When the onward rush of a powerful spirit sweeps a weaker one to its destruction, the commonplaces of the moral judgment are better left unmade. If Miss Nightingale had been less ruthless, Sidney Herbert would not have perished; but then, she would not have been Miss Nightingale. The force that created was the force that destroyed. It was her Demon that was responsible. When the fatal news reached her, she was overcome by agony. In the revolution of her feelings, she made a worship of the dead man's memory; and the facile instrument which had broken in her hand she spoke of for ever after as her "Master." Then, almost at the same moment, another blow fell upon her. Arthur Clough, worn out by labours very different from those of Sidney Herbert, died too: never more would he tie up her parcels. And yet a third disaster followed. The faithful Aunt Mai did not, to be sure, die; no, she did something almost worse: she left Miss Nightingale. She was growing old, and she felt that she had closer and more imperative duties with her own family. Her niece could hardly forgive her. She poured out, in one of her enormous letters, a passionate diatribe upon the faithlessness, the lack of sympathy, the stupidity, the ineptitude of women. Her doctrines had taken no hold among them; she had never known one who had *appris à apprendre*; she could not even get a woman secretary; "they don't know the names of the Cabinet Ministers—they don't know which of the Churches has Bishops and which not." As for the spirit of self-sacrifice, well—Sidney Herbert and Arthur Clough were men, and they indeed had shown their devotion; but women—! She would mount three widow's caps "for a sign." The first two would be for Clough and for her Master; but the third, "the biggest widow's cap of all"—would be for Aunt Mai. She did well to be angry; she was deserted in her hour of need; and, after all, could she be sure that even the male sex was so impeccable? There was Dr. Sutherland, bungling as usual. Perhaps even he intended to go off, one of these days, too? She gave him a look, and he shivered in his shoes. No!—she grinned sardonically; she would always have Dr. Sutherland. And then she reflected that there was one thing more that she would always have—her work.

Sidney Herbert's death finally put an end to Miss Nightingale's dream of a reformed War Office. For a moment, indeed, in the first agony of her disappointment, she had wildly clutched at a straw; she had written to Mr. Gladstone to beg him to take up the burden of Sidney Herbert's work. And Mr Gladstone had replied with a sympathetic account of the funeral.

Succeeding Secretaries of State managed between them to undo a good deal of what had been accomplished, but they could not undo it all; and for ten years more (1862-72) Miss Nightingale remained a potent influence at the War Office. After that, her direct connection with the army came to an end, and her energies began to turn more and more completely towards more general objects. Her work upon hospital reform assumed enormous proportions; she was able to improve the conditions in infirmaries and workhouses; and one of her most remarkable papers forestalls the recommendations of the Poor Law

Commission of 1909. Her training school for nurses, with all that it involved in initiative, control, responsibility, and combat, would have been enough in itself to have absorbed the whole efforts of at least two lives of ordinary vigour. And at the same time her work in connection with India, which had begun with the Sanitary Commission on the Indian Army, spread and ramified in a multitude of directions. Her tentacles reached the India Office and succeeded in establishing a hold even upon those slippery high places. For many years it was *de rigueur* for the newly appointed Viceroy, before he left England, to pay a visit to Miss Nightingale.

After much hesitation, she had settled down in a small house in South Street, where she remained for the rest of her life. That life was a very long one; the dying woman reached her ninety-first year. Her ill-health gradually diminished; the crises of extreme danger became less frequent, and at last, altogether ceased; she remained an invalid, but an invalid of a curious character—an invalid who was too weak to walk downstairs and who worked far harder than most Cabinet Ministers. Her illness, whatever it may have been, was certainly not inconvenient. It involved seclusion; and an extraordinary, an unparalleled seclusion was, it might almost have been said, the mainspring of Miss Nightingale's life. Lying on her sofa in the little upper room in South Street, she combined the intense vitality of a dominating woman of the world with the mysterious and romantic quality of a myth. She was a legend in her lifetime, and she knew it. She tasted the joys of power, like those Eastern Emperors whose autocratic rule was based upon invisibility, with the mingled satisfactions of obscurity and fame. And she found the machinery of illness hardly less effective as a barrier against the eyes of men than the ceremonial of a palace. Great statesmen and renowned generals were obliged to beg for audiences; admiring princesses from foreign countries found that they must see her at her own time, or not at all; and the ordinary mortal had no hope of ever getting beyond the downstairs sitting-room and Dr. Sutherland. For that indefatigable disciple did, indeed, never desert her. He might be impatient, he might be restless, but he remained. His "incurable looseness of thought," for so she termed it, continued at her service to the end. Once, it is true, he had actually ventured to take a holiday; but he was recalled, and he did not repeat the experiment. He was wanted downstairs. There he sat, transacting business, answering correspondence, interviewing callers, and exchanging innumerable notes with the unseen power above. Sometimes word came down that Miss Nightingale was just well enough to see one of her visitors. The fortunate man was led up, was ushered, trembling, into the shaded chamber, and, of course, could never afterwards forget the interview. Very rarely, indeed, once or twice a year, perhaps, but nobody could be quite certain, in deadly secrecy, Miss Nightingale went out for a drive in the Park. Unrecognised, the living legend flitted for a moment before the common gaze. And the precaution was necessary; for there were times when, at some public function, the rumour of her presence was spread abroad; and ladies, mistaken by the crowd for Miss Nightingale, were followed, pressed upon, and vehemently supplicated

—"Let me touch your shawl,"—"Let me stroke your arm"; such was the strange adoration in the hearts of the people. That vast reserve of force lay there behind her; she could use it, if she would. But she preferred never to use it. On occasions, she might hint or threaten; she might balance the sword of Damocles over the head of the Bison; she might, by a word, by a glance, remind some refractory minister, some unpersuadable viceroy, sitting in audience with her in the little upper room, that she was something more than a mere sick woman, that she had only, so to speak, to go to the window and wave her handkerchief, for . . . dreadful things to follow. But that was enough; they understood; the myth was there—obvious, portentous, impalpable; and so it remained to the last.

With statesmen and governors at her beck and call, with her hands on a hundred strings, with mighty provinces at her feet, with foreign governments agog for her counsel, building hospitals, training nurses—she still felt that she had not enough to do. She sighed for more worlds to conquer—more, and yet more. She looked about her—what was there left? Of course! Philosophy! After the world of action, the world of thought. Having set right the health of the British Army, she would now do the same good service for the religious convictions of mankind. She had long noticed—with regret—the growing tendency towards free-thinking among artisans. With regret, but not altogether with surprise; the current teaching of Christianity was sadly to seek; nay, Christianity itself was not without its defects. She would rectify these errors. She would correct the mistakes of the Churches; she would point out just where Christianity was wrong; and she would explain to the artisans what the facts of the case really were. Before her departure for the Crimea, she had begun this work; and now, in the intervals of her other labours, she completed it. Her "Suggestions for Thought to the Searchers after Truth among the Artisans of England" (1860), unravels, in the course of three portly volumes, the difficulties—hitherto, curiously enough, unsolved—connected with such matters as Belief in God, the Plan of Creation, the Origin of Evil, the Future Life, Necessity and Free Will, Law, and the Nature of Morality. The Origin of Evil, in particular, held no perplexities for Miss Nightingale. "We cannot conceive," she remarks, "that Omnipotent Righteousness would find satisfaction in *solitary existence*." This being so, the only question remaining to be asked is, "What beings should we then conceive that God would create?" Now, He cannot create perfect beings, "since, essentially, perfection is one"; if He did so, He would only be adding to Himself. Thus the conclusion is obvious: He *must* create *imperfect* ones. Omnipotent Righteousness, faced by the intolerable *impasse* of a solitary existence, finds itself bound, by the very nature of the case, to create the hospitals at Scutari. Whether this argument would have satisfied the artisans, was never discovered, for only a very few copies of the book were printed for private circulation. One copy was sent to Mr. Mill, who acknowledged it in an extremely polite letter. He felt himself obliged, however, to confess that he had not been altogether convinced by Miss Nightingale's proof of the existence of God. Miss Nightingale was surprised and mortified; she had thought better of Mr. Mill; for surely her proof of the

existence of God could hardly be improved upon. "A law," she had pointed out, "implies a lawgiver." Now the Universe is full of laws—the law of gravitation, the law of the excluded middle, and many others; hence it follows that the Universe has a lawgiver—and what would Mr. Mill be satisfied with, if he was not satisfied with that?

Perhaps Mr. Mill might have asked why the argument had not been pushed to its logical conclusion. Clearly, if we are to trust the analogy of human institutions, we must remember that laws are, as a matter of fact, not dispensed by lawgivers, but passed by Act of Parliament. Miss Nightingale, however, with all her experience of public life, never stopped to consider the question whether God might not be a Limited Monarchy.

Yet her conception of God was certainly not orthodox. She felt towards Him as she might have felt towards a glorified sanitary engineer; and in some of her speculations she seems hardly to distinguish between the Deity and the Drains. As one turns over these singular pages, one has the impression that Miss Nightingale has got the Almighty too into her clutches, and that, if He is not careful, she will kill Him with overwork.

Then, suddenly, in the very midst of the ramifying generalities of her metaphysical disquisitions there is an unexpected turn, and the reader is plunged all at once into something particular, something personal, something impregnated with intense experience—a virulent invective upon the position of women in the upper ranks of society. Forgetful alike of her high argument and of the artisans, the bitter creature rails through a hundred pages of close print at the falsities of family life, the ineptitudes of marriage, the emptiness of convention, in the spirit of an Ibsen or a Samuel Butler. Her fierce pen, shaking with intimate anger, depicts in biting sentences the fearful fate of an unmarried girl in a wealthy household. It is a *cri du cœur*; and then, as suddenly, she returns once more to instruct the artisans upon the nature of Omnipotent Righteousness.

Her mind was, indeed, better qualified to dissect the concrete and distasteful fruits of actual life than to construct a coherent system of abstract philosophy. In spite of her respect for Law, she was never at home with a generalisation. Thus, though the great achievement of her life lay in the immense impetus which she gave to the scientific treatment of sickness, a true comprehension of the scientific method itself was alien to her spirit. Like most great men of action—perhaps like all—she was simply an empiricist. She believed in what she saw, and she acted accordingly; beyond that she would not go. She had found in Scutari that fresh air and light played an effective part in the prevention of the maladies with which she had to deal; and that was enough for her; she would not inquire further; what were the general principles underlying that fact—or even whether there were any—she refused to consider. Years after the discoveries of Pasteur and Lister, she laughed at what she called the "germ-fetish." There was no such thing as "infection"; she had never seen it, therefore it did not exist. But she *had* seen the good effects of fresh air; therefore there could be no doubt about them; and therefore it was essential

that the bedrooms of patients should be well ventilated. Such was her doctrine; and in those days of hermetically sealed windows it was a very valuable one. But it was a purely empirical doctrine, and thus it led to some unfortunate results. When, for instance, her influence in India was at its height, she issued orders that all hospital windows should be invariably kept open. The authorities, who knew what an open window in the hot weather meant, protested, but in vain; Miss Nightingale was incredulous. She knew nothing of the hot weather, but she did know the value of fresh air—from personal experience; the authorities were talking nonsense and the windows must be kept open all the year round. There was a great outcry from all the doctors in India, but she was firm; and for a moment it seemed possible that her terrible commands would have to be put into execution. Lord Lawrence, however, was Viceroy, and he was able to intimate to Miss Nightingale, with sufficient authority, that he himself had decided upon the question, and that his decision must stand, even against her own. Upon that, she gave way, but reluctantly and quite unconvinced; she was only puzzled by the unexpected weakness of Lord Lawrence. No doubt, if she had lived to-day, and if her experience had lain, not among cholera cases at Scutari but among yellow-fever cases in Panama, she would have declared fresh air a fetish, and would have maintained to her dying day that the only really effective way of dealing with disease was by the destruction of mosquitoes.

Yet her mind, so positive, so realistic, so ultra-practical, had its singular revulsions, its mysterious moods of mysticism and of doubt. At times, lying sleepless in the early hours, she fell into long strange agonised meditations, and then, seizing a pencil, she would commit to paper the confessions of her soul. The morbid longings of her pre-Crimean days came over her once more; she filled page after page with self-examination, self-criticism, self-surrender. "O Father," she wrote, "I submit, I resign myself, I accept with all my heart this stretching out of Thy hand to save me. . . . O how vain it is, the vanity of vanities, to live in men's thoughts instead of God's!" She was lonely, she was miserable. "Thou knowest that through all these horrible twenty years, I have been supported by the belief that I was working with Thee who wert bringing everyone, even our poor nurses, to perfection,"—and yet, after all, what was the result? Had not even she been an unprofitable servant? One night, waking suddenly, she saw, in the dim light of the night-lamp, tenebrous shapes upon the wall. The past rushed back upon her. "Am I she who once stood on that Crimean height?" she wildly asked—"The Lady with a lamp shall stand. . . . The lamp shows me only my utter shipwreck."

She sought consolation in the writings of the Mystics and in a correspondence with Mr. Jowett. For many years the Master of Balliol acted as her spiritual adviser. He discussed with her in a series of enormous letters the problems of religion and philosophy; he criticised her writings on those subjects with the tactful sympathy of a cleric who was also a man of the world; and he even ventured to attempt at times to instil into her rebellious nature some of his own peculiar suavity. "I sometimes think," he told her, "that you

ought seriously to consider how your work may be carried on, not with less energy, but in a calmer spirit. I am not blaming the past. . . . But I want the peace of God to settle on the future." He recommended her to spend her time no longer in "conflicts with Government offices," and to take up some literary work. He urged her to "work out her notion of Divine Perfection," in a series of essays for *Frazer's Magazine*. She did so; and the result was submitted to Mr. Froude, who pronounced the second essay to be "even more pregnant than the first. I cannot tell," he said, "how sanitary, with disordered intellects, the effects of such papers will be." Mr. Carlyle, indeed, used different language, and some remarks of his about a lost lamb bleating on the mountains having been unfortunately repeated to Miss Nightingale, all Mr. Jowett's suavity was required to keep the peace. In a letter of fourteen sheets, he turned her attention from the painful topic towards a discussion of Quietism. "I don't see why," said the Master of Balliol, "active life might not become a sort of passive life too." And then, he added, "I sometimes fancy there are possibilities of human character much greater than have been realised." She found such sentiments helpful, underlining them in blue pencil; and, in return, she assisted her friend with a long series of elaborate comments upon the Dialogues of Plato, most of which he embodied in the second edition of his translation. Gradually her interest became more personal; she told him never to work again after midnight, and he obeyed her. Then she helped him to draw up a special form of daily service for the College Chapel, with selections from the Psalms, under the heads of "God the Lord, God the Judge, God the Father, and God the Friend,"—though, indeed, this project was never realised; for the Bishop of Oxford disallowed the alterations, exercising his legal powers, on the advice of Sir Travers Twiss.

Their relations became intimate. "The spirit of the twenty-third psalm and the spirit of the nineteenth psalm should be united in our lives," Mr. Jowett said. Eventually, she asked him to do her a singular favour. Would he, knowing what he did of her religious views, come to London and administer to her the Holy Sacrament? He did not hesitate, and afterwards declared that he would always regard the occasion as a solemn event in his life. He was devoted to her; though the precise nature of his feelings towards her never quite transpired. Her feelings towards him were more mixed. At first, he was "that great and good man"—"that true saint, Mr. Jowett"; but, as time went on, some gall was mingled with the balm; the acrimony of her nature asserted itself. She felt that she gave more sympathy than she received; she was exhausted, she was annoyed, by his conversation. Her tongue, one day, could not refrain from shooting out at him. "He comes to me, and he talks to me," she said, "as if I were someone else."

At one time she had almost decided to end her life in retirement, as a patient at St. Thomas's Hospital. But partly owing to the persuasions of Mr. Jowett, she changed her mind; for forty-five years she remained in South Street; and in South Street she died. As old age approached, though her

influence with the official world gradually diminished, her activities seemed to remain as intense and widespread as before. When hospitals were to be built, when schemes of sanitary reform were in agitation, when wars broke out, she was still the adviser of all Europe. Still, with a characteristic self-assurance, she watched from her Mayfair bedroom over the welfare of India. Still, with an indefatigable enthusiasm, she pushed forward the work, which, perhaps, was nearer to her heart, more completely her own, than all the rest—the training of nurses. In her moments of deepest depression, when her greatest achievements seemed to lose their lustre, she thought of her nurses, and was comforted. The ways of God, she found, were strange indeed. “How inefficient I was in the Crimea,” she noted. “Yet He has raised up from it trained nursing.”

At other times she was better satisfied. Looking back, she was amazed by the enormous change which, since her early days, had come over the whole treatment of illness, the whole conception of public and domestic health—a change in which, she knew, she had played her part. One of her Indian admirers, the Aga Khan, came to visit her. She expatiated on the marvellous advances she had lived to see in the management of hospitals, in drainage, in ventilation, in sanitary work of every kind. There was a pause; and then, “Do you think you are improving?” asked the Aga Khan. She was a little taken aback, and said, “What do you mean by ‘improving’?” He replied, “Believing more in God.” She saw that he had a view of God which was different from hers. “A most interesting man,” she noted after the interview; “but you could never teach him sanitation.”

When old age actually came, something curious happened. Destiny, having waited very patiently, played a queer trick on Miss Nightingale. The benevolence and public spirit of that long life had only been equalled by its acerbity. Her virtue had dwelt in hardness, and she had poured forth her unstinted usefulness with a bitter smile upon her lips. And now the sarcastic years brought the proud woman her punishment. She was not to die as she had lived. The sting was to be taken out of her: she was to be made soft; she was to be reduced to compliance and complacency. The change came gradually, but at last it was unmistakable. The terrible commander who had driven Sidney Herbert to his death, to whom Mr. Jowett had applied the words of Homer, *ἄμωτον μεμαῖντα*—raging insatiably—now accepted small compliments with gratitude, and indulged in sentimental friendships with young girls. The author of “*Notes on Nursing*”—that classical compendium of the besetting sins of the sisterhood, drawn up with the detailed acrimony, the vindictive relish, of a Swift—now spent long hours in composing sympathetic Addresses to Probationers, whom she petted and wept over in turn. And, at the same time there appeared a corresponding alteration in her physical mould. The thin, angular woman, with her haughty eye and her acrid mouth had vanished; and in her place was the rounded bulky form of a fat old lady, smiling all day long. Then something else became visible. The brain which had been steeled at Scutari was indeed, literally, growing soft.

Senility—an ever more and more amiable senility—descended. Towards the end, consciousness itself grew lost in a roseate haze, and melted into nothingness. It was just then, three years before her death, when she was eighty-seven years old (1907), that those in authority bethought them that the opportune moment had come for bestowing a public honour on Florence Nightingale. She was offered the Order of Merit. That Order, whose roll contains, among other distinguished names, those of Sir Laurence Alma Tadema and Sir Edward Elgar, is remarkable chiefly for the fact that, as its title indicates, it is bestowed because its recipient deserves it, and for no other reason. Miss Nightingale's representatives accepted the honour, and her name, after a lapse of many years, once more appeared in the Press. Congratulations from all sides came pouring in. There was a universal burst of enthusiasm—a final revivification of the ancient myth. Among her other admirers, the German Emperor took this opportunity of expressing his feelings towards her. "His Majesty," wrote the German Ambassador, "having just brought to a close a most enjoyable stay in the beautiful neighbourhood of your old home near Romsey, has commanded me to present you with some flowers as a token of his esteem." Then, by Royal command, the Order of Merit was brought to South Street, and there was a little ceremony of presentation. Sir Douglas Dawson, after a short speech, stepped forward, and handed the insignia of the Order to Miss Nightingale. Propped up by pillows, she dimly recognised that some compliment was being paid her. "Too kind—too kind," she murmured; and she was not ironical.

AUTOBIOGRAPHIC CHAPTERS

SCHOOL DAYS¹

by Mary Dixon Thayer

You are going to school. It's all decided. Aunt Agatha says so. And Uncle Edward. And everybody. To school! Think of it!

Tomorrow you are to meet the Lady Who Keeps the School. In bed you lie awake, thinking. When you wake up, there is the queer feeling in your stomach. You cannot eat. You cannot sit still.

Isn't Aunt Agatha ever going to get up? It is eight o'clock. There is nothing to do. You go out on the porch. Sun is spread over everything. There are little balls of water on the tops of things. The sun pokes the balls, and they laugh. Everything shines.

You begin to skip. You skip up and down the porch. Up and down. Birds sing. Winds come. Your hair flops on your neck. You want to float. You spread out your arms. Nothing happens. You go on skipping. You are hot, and the wind is cold. What fun it is to skip! People hardly ever do it . . . up and down . . . up and down. . . . On the wall along the porch hang red flowers, and there are leaves squeezed down flat in between. Under the leaves, you know, run tiny bugs. They are so small that you would never know that they were there if you had not hunted for them, once. But you have hunted for them. You know that they are there.

You know where there is a bird's nest, too, in the leaves. You know where a rabbit sleeps under the porch. You are very wise. You skip. Up and down . . . up and down. . . . You will never get tired. You will go on skipping forever. The sky rolls. The world rocks. Trees jump. Houses wiggle. . . . Oh! What fun!

Aunt Agatha puts some of herself out of a window. She has on a wrapper, and her hair is mussed. She says, "How *can* you skip at this hour?"

Why not? It is morning!

You go on skipping, and you look up at Aunt Agatha. She is bouncing up and down. And she does not know that she is bouncing. Aunt Agatha bouncing! Imagine! You have to sit down on the wall and laugh about it. And Aunt Agatha pulls herself into the house, and disappears.

¹ From M. D. Thayer, *Ends of Things*, published and copyrighted by E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., New York.

You look to see how many bugs you have sat upon. You have sat upon three. And they are all dead because you laughed at Aunt Agatha.

At last you start off with Aunt Agatha to see the Lady Who Keeps the School. No more lessons with Mademoiselle!

You arrive at the school. Little girls are running around the yard screaming and sucking oranges. They stare at you. Some of them whisper things, and giggle. You pretend not to notice. You go in. At first everything is dark inside. When it gets lighter you see that you are in a hall that has big rooms going out of it, and all the rooms are filled up with tables that have slanty tops.

You go along the hall with Aunt Agatha till you come to a door. A lady opens it. She puts her hand on your head, and looks at you. The lady has little brown eyes that shine. She talks with a smile, and says, "Well, now. . . ."

After Aunt Agatha has talked to her a lot, you go down the hall, again, to the front door. Just as you get to it a bell begins to ring, and all the little girls come squeezing into the house. They come in in a long, wobbly row. Some of them are still gobbling down food and taking sucks on oranges. They all look at you hard, as you go by, and you pretend that you are not afraid. You try smiling at one of them, but she stays solemn.

You get into the Glass Wagon with Aunt Agatha, and Aunt Agatha says, "There now! *That's* settled!"

You are going to school tomorrow. What happens in schools?

After a long time, tomorrow comes. Albert takes you to school, and drives away. You are all alone on the outside of schools!

There is a lot of noise inside. You go in, and there are little girls in a room. They are taking off rubber shoes, and coats, and gaiters, and tights; when you arrive they all start watching you. They all have shorter legs than you have. It must be your legs that are funny? You try to walk with your knees bent, so your dress will cover up your legs, and you watch the little girls out of the ends of your eyes to see if they are still looking at you. And they are. It is your legs. . . .

You follow the little girls upstairs. You ask one of them something, so as to make friends. But she says "What?" and runs away.

You go into a room where there is a thin lady who does not see that you are new. You stand around in front of the thin lady, trying to make her see how new you are. After a while she sees you. She asks you what your name is, and you get put at a table that doesn't fit yourself.

A bell rings. All the little girls sit down. Lessons begin. Lessons about numbers, lessons about people, lessons about places. All morning it is exciting. You do not have to do anything but listen. That is because you are new. You listen, and look around the room at the little girls.

Some of the little girls say their lessons off quickly, and then sit down and draw pictures on the top of their tables. Some of the little girls stay looking interested, but they do not know their lessons. The room has square win-

dows, and there are flowers around in red buckets. There are pictures on the wall of men shooting guns into each other!

If you keep sitting down, the little girls do not stare at you. That is because they cannot see your legs.

A long while before it is time for Christmas to arrive, you begin to learn songs about it at school. All the school has to learn them. Miss Brooks teaches you the songs, so the lessons about numbers get shorter.

In the middle of the morning you stop everything that you are doing and you go up to the top of school, where there is a piano. You stand in rows, and Miss Brooks plays the piano, and you sing songs about Christmas. . . . "Ring out wild bells to the wi—ld . . . wi—ld sky!" . . . Everybody sings it hard. And you see a snowstorm, and little villages. In the villages are churches, and all the bells in all the churches go ringing. The snowflakes are very big. The bells are very far away. . . .

"Stop!" says Miss Brooks. She holds up something that looks like the thing Mademoiselle has to pull out hairs with on her chin. Miss Brooks says "stop!" and all the bells stop ringing, and the snowflakes go, and you stand and listen to Miss Brooks talk. Then you begin over again. . . . "Ring out wild bells. . . ." It is so lovely! You want to dance! You want to dance around and around the world while all the bells in the world go ringing! You hold your music up in front of you because you are happy, and you are not supposed to be happy, in schools. If you laugh, other people will laugh too, without knowing what you are laughing about, and Miss Brooks will say, "What is all this disturbance? Who is making all this disturbance?" and if you say "me," Miss Brooks will say: "Please, *please* do not say 'me'! Haven't you studied your Mother's tongue?"

Why doesn't Miss Brooks want you to say "me," if it is? How can you study your Mother's tongue if your Mother is in Heaven?

When the singing is over, you are sad. You have to go downstairs and forget about bells, and little white villages, and snowstorms. You have to sit and hear about numbers, or places made with lines and called Maps. How can you make places into lines? What is the use of doing it? Why not let them stay beautiful?

The little girl who sits next to you is Arabella. She has a quiet face. She always knows her lessons. Nobody ever laughs at Arabella.

When she says her lessons it sounds as if she were reading out loud. She learns everything out of books and keeps it in her head to say off to Miss Brooks. Arabella says it is the easiest thing! It would be fun to be like Arabella and never have to ask questions. You are not supposed to ask questions, in schools.

Once in a while you have a thing called a Test. You are supposed to write down what you know. If you know hardly anything, you are Dull.

Once you are writing down a lot of things about a man called Paul .Revere. You know about him because he is a poem. Arabella doesn't seem

to know about him. She is sitting poking her pencil into things and looking around. Then you see that Arabella is looking slantwise at the things you are writing. And after a while Arabella begins to write again.

Next day you hear about the marks you got. Miss Brooks says: "Arabella has the highest mark of all. She has answered every question. Marian has the lowest mark. She has only one question right. It is the question about Paul Revere."

There is a girl at school that you love. You love her right away, when you first look at her. At recess, or when you walk by her in the hall, she looks at you, and you love her.

She has eyes that are blue, and she has curly eyelashes. When she is studying, her eyelashes come down over her eyes and cover them up. She has hair that blows around in little curls when the window is open. You know that she thinks beautiful things.

One day you write her a little letter. It goes over to her, under people's desks, and as it goes you shiver, and you cannot look. The note says: "Will you take a walk with me at recess?"

Out of the ends of your eyes you see her reading it. Then you see her writing down an answer. The answer is coming back to you, under the desks. You put out your hand and touch it. You see her writing for the first time. It is slanty. Your name looks beautiful, written by her!

You put up the lid of your desk and open the letter. There are shaky feelings in your fingers. Everything gets far away. You open it. It says, "I will meet you under the stairs. . . ."

When you meet her, you cannot say what you want to. You say, "I'm glad you want to walk . . ." and she says, "I always walk, at recess . . ." and you go down the hall and out into the world.

People bump into you but you don't care. People call things at you, but you don't listen. You go along out into the road where the trees live in rows, and Strange People are.

She puts her hand into your pocket where your hand is, and you stop breathing. She says, "You're new, aren't you?" and you feel her hand touching your hand inside your pocket, and where it touches come little songs that go up through your fingers into yourself, and through yourself into the world.

The trees along the road must hear them. . . . The Strange People who pass you, must know . . . but the trees are very solemn and quiet, and the Strange People go by without looking. . . .

After that, school is different. She is there. You can look at her. You can touch her hand. It does not matter what she says.

One day you tell Sarah about her. Sarah giggles. She says: "Oh, you have a crush. Everybody gets them."

There is a hill that is meant to slide down on, on sleds. You have a sled. You are learning how it likes to be played with. It runs along over the

snow behind you, and you hold on to it by a string. Sometimes it is alive, and then it knows what you are going to do. It jumps away from you when you want to get on to it. It upsets you. If you let go of the string, it will run away. But sometimes, it is only a sled.

In the afternoon, when you get back from school, the sled is waiting for you. It waits for you on the porch, where it stands on one end of itself and looks into the parlor. Then you carry it down into the world. And it runs after you, and alongside you, and ahead of you, until you come to the top of the hill.

Then your sled pulls hard at the string. It wants to get away. It wants to get to the bottom of the hill. You give it a little push, and jump on top of it. You are off! You can feel your heart go bumping against the flowers on the sled. Do the flowers feel your heart bumping? Do they mind?

Slowly . . . a little bit faster . . . faster . . . faster. . . Wind comes by you, singing. Trees go by you, swinging. You swallow big lumps of cold day. The world goes under you, and is white. . . .

You turn a corner. You stick your feet into the white world. Snow gets into your eyes. Snow comes up through your fingers. Your sled is not a sled. It is a horse. It is a horse with a long mane blowing in the wind! You are riding it . . . you are holding on to its mane . . . you are galloping . . . down . . . down . . . then the world comes up all around you, and you laugh. Now the white horse is turning back into a sled. The sled is going to stop. . . . You are at the bottom of things.

You roll off into the snow and are happy. A crow flies away over the sky. It looks funny, upside down. You wave to the crow, and it flaps its wings to you, and coughs. But it does not stop. It flies away. . . .

You put your face into the snow. All the thoughts in your head are white. You look up—and there are black trees standing up straight on the white world and trying to hide the red sky. Then all the thoughts in your head get black and red. . . . It is fun! You shut your eyes and try to remember the world. You cannot remember it very well. You open your eyes and look at it. Then you try all over again . . . this time you can remember. There is a picture in your head. You can carry that picture around and look at it, even when your eyes are shut! In summer you will be able to shut up your eyes and see that picture just the same. You will see black trees, and red clouds, and the world being covered up with diamonds.

Sometimes, for school, you have to write stories out of your head. You do it at home, and then you take the stories with you to school, and give them to Miss Marvel. If Miss Marvel does not like the stories that come out of you, she makes red marks all over them, and throws them away.

Most of the time Miss Marvel tells you what the stories have to be about. She has made stories come out of you about lots of things. But one day she says: "This time you can choose your own subject."

You are glad. You have excited feelings. Somebody says, "Oh, Miss

Marvel, tell us what to write about . . . how do we know what to write about? . . ."

But Miss Marvel says, "No. Choose your own subject. Write about anything you like. . . ."

Just think! There is the whole world around you! And you can write about anything you like!

You can hardly wait to get home. You have sums to do, and other lessons. But you forget about them. You think only of the story that can be about anything in the world. . . .

You run upstairs to the nursery. For a minute you wonder what to write . . . then you see a Prince. He has green clothes, and hair in curls. He goes walking over the world, and wherever he goes something lovely happens. You begin to write.

Mademoiselle comes in and talks. You wish for her to go away, and she goes. The Prince does anything you want! He runs into woods and finds places. He makes castles. He is a fairy prince.

Mademoiselle comes in again with supper. You have to leave the Prince, and eat. But after supper he comes running back to you, and you do not end him off till it is time for bed.

In bed you cannot sleep because of the Prince. You think of things that he ought to have done. You think of things you can still make him do. You know the Prince better than anybody that you know.

Next day you give the Prince to Miss Marvel. Will she understand about him? Will she cover him all over with red marks? Will she throw him away?

You have to give the Prince to Miss Marvel. It is mean of you. But you have to do it. You feel shaky when Miss Marvel takes him and puts him in a drawer. You want to tell her that he is beautiful, and that she oughtn't to squeeze him in there. . . .

You have not done any of your other lessons. People are mad. And you cannot tell them about the Prince. You cannot blame things on him. You are sad. But when you think of the Prince, sadness goes. You are glad you have made him, even if he will be thrown away. Anyway you will have him in your head forever.

When you are going home, Miss Marvel makes you stop at her desk. She looks funny. She is holding the Prince and turning over his pages. She says: "Who helped you with this, Marian?"

Is she making jokes? Who could help you with the Prince? You laugh. But Miss Marvel says, "Answer me, Marian. Who helped you with this story?" and you say, "Why, the Prince. . . ." You don't know how to explain the Prince to Miss Marvel. She says: "Well. You are a strange child."

Then she puts him back in the drawer. You wish for him. You say, "Can I have the Prince again, Miss Marvel, ever?" But Miss Marvel says, "I would like to keep the story, Marian, if you don't mind."

You do mind. But Miss Marvel keeps him.

UNIVERSITY DAYS¹*by James Thurber*

I PASSED all the other courses that I took at my university, but I could never pass botany. This was because all botany students had to spend several hours a week in a laboratory looking through a microscope at plant cells, and I could never see through a microscope. I never once saw a cell through a microscope. This used to enrage my instructor. He would wander around the laboratory pleased with the progress all the students were making in drawing the involved and, so I am told, interesting structure of flower cells, until he came to me. I would just be standing there. "I can't see anything," I would say. He would begin patiently enough, explaining how anybody can see through a microscope, but he would always end up in a fury, claiming that I could *too* see through a microscope but just pretended that I couldn't. "It takes away from the beauty of flowers anyway," I used to tell him. "We are not concerned with beauty in this course," he would say. "We are concerned solely with what I may call the *mechanics* of flars." "Well," I'd say, "I can't see anything." "Try it just once again," he'd say, and I would put my eye to the microscope and see nothing at all, except now and again, a nebulous milky substance—a phenomenon of maladjustment. You were supposed to see a vivid, restless clockwork of sharply defined plant cells. "I see what looks like a lot of milk," I would tell him. This, he claimed, was the result of my not having adjusted the microscope properly; so he would readjust it for me, or rather, for himself. And I would look again and see milk.

I finally took a deferred pass, as they called it, and waited a year and tried again. (You had to pass one of the biological sciences or you couldn't graduate.) The professor had come back from vacation brown as a berry, bright-eyed, and eager to explain cell-structure again to his classes. "Well," he said to me, cheerily, when we met in the first laboratory hour of the semester, "we're going to see cells this time, aren't we?" "Yes, sir," I said. Students to right of me and to left of me and in front of me were seeing cells; what's more, they were quietly drawing pictures of them in their notebooks. Of course, I didn't see anything.

"We'll try it," the professor said to me, grimly, "with every adjustment of the microscope known to man. As God is my witness, I'll arrange this glass so that you see cells through it or I'll give up teaching. In twenty-two years of botany, I—" He cut off abruptly for he was beginning to quiver all over, like Lionel Barrymore, and he genuinely wished to hold onto his temper; his scenes with me had taken a great deal out of him.

¹ From J. Thurber, *My Life and Hard Times*. By permission of the author.

So we tried it with every adjustment of the microscope known to man. With only one of them did I see anything but blackness or the familiar lacteal opacity, and that time I saw, to my pleasure and amazement, a variegated constellation of flecks, specks, and dots. These I hastily drew. The instructor, noting my activity, came back from an adjoining desk, a smile on his lips and his eyebrows high in hope. He looked at my cell drawing. "What's that?" he demanded, with a hint of a squeal in his voice. "That's what I saw," I said. "You didn't, you didn't, you *didn't*!" he screamed, losing control of his temper instantly, and he bent over and squinted into the microscope. His head snapped up. "That's your eye!" he shouted. "You've fixed the lens so that it reflects! You've drawn your eye!"

Another course that I didn't like, but somehow managed to pass, was economics. I went to that class straight from the botany class, which didn't help me any in understanding either subject. I used to get them mixed up. But not as mixed up as another student in my economics class who came there direct from a physics laboratory. He was a tackle on the football team, named Bolenciewicz. At that time Ohio State University had one of the best football teams in the country, and Bolenciewicz was one of its outstanding stars. In order to be eligible to play it was necessary for him to keep up in his studies, a very difficult matter, for while he was not dumber than an ox he was not any smarter. Most of his professors were lenient and helped him along. None gave him more hints, in answering questions, or asked him simpler ones than the economics professor, a thin, timid man named Bassum. One day when we were on the subject of transportation and distribution, it came Bolenciewicz's turn to answer a question. "Name one means of transportation," the professor said to him. No light came into the big tackle's eyes. "Just any means of transportation," said the professor. Bolenciewicz sat staring at him. "That is," pursued the professor, "any medium, agency, or method of going from one place to another." Bolenciewicz had the look of a man who is being led into a trap. "You may choose among steam, horse-drawn, or electrically propelled vehicles," said the instructor. "I might suggest the one which we commonly take in making long journeys across land." There was a profound silence in which everybody stirred uneasily, including Bolenciewicz and Mr. Bassum. Mr. Bassum abruptly broke this silence in an amazing manner. "Choo-choo-choo," he said, in a low voice, and turned instantly scarlet. He glanced appealingly around the room. All of us, of course, shared Mr. Bassum's desire that Bolenciewicz should stay abreast of the class in economics, for the Illinois game, one of the hardest and most important of the season, was only a week off. "Toot, toot, too-tooooooot!" some student with a deep voice moaned, and we all looked encouragingly at Bolenciewicz. Somebody else gave a fine imitation of a locomotive letting off steam. Mr. Bassum himself rounded off the little show. "Ding, dong, ding, dong," he said, hopefully. Bolenciewicz was staring at the floor now, trying to think, his great brow furrowed, his huge hands rubbing together, his face red.

"How did you come to college this year, Mr. Bolenciewicz?" asked the professor. "*Chuffa chuffa, chuffa chuffa.*"

"M'father sent me," said the football player.

"What on?" asked Bassum.

"I git an 'lowance," said the tackle, in a low, husky voice, obviously embarrassed.

"No, no," said Bassum. "Name a means of transportation. What did you *ride* here on?"

"Train," said Bolenciewicz.

"Quite right," said the professor. "Now, Mr. Nugent, will you tell us——"

If I went through anguish in botany and economics—for different reasons—gymnasium work was even worse. I don't even like to think about it. They wouldn't let you play games or join in the exercises with your glasses on and I couldn't see with mine off. I bumped into professors, horizontal bars, agricultural students, and swinging iron rings. Not being able to see, I could take it but I couldn't dish it out. Also, in order to pass gymnasium (and you had to pass it to graduate) you had to learn to swim if you didn't know how. I didn't like the swimming pool, I didn't like swimming, and I didn't like the swimming instructor, and after all these years I still don't. I never swam but I passed my gym work anyway, by having another student give my gymnasium number (978) and swim across the pool in my place. He was a quiet, amiable blonde youth, number 473, and he would have seen through a microscope for me if we could have got away with it, but we couldn't get away with it. Another thing I didn't like about gymnasium work was that they made you strip the day you registered. It is impossible for me to be happy when I am stripped and being asked a lot of questions. Still, I did better than a lanky agricultural student who was cross-examined just before I was. They asked each student what college he was in—that is, whether Arts, Engineering, Commerce, or Agriculture. "What college are you in?" the instructor snapped at the youth in front of me. "Ohio State University," he said promptly.

It wasn't that agricultural student but it was another a whole lot like him who decided to take up journalism, possibly on the ground that when farming went to hell he could fall back on newspaper work. He didn't realize, of course, that that would be very much like falling back full-length on a kit of carpenter's tools. Haskins didn't seem cut out for journalism, being too embarrassed to talk to anybody and unable to use a typewriter, but the editor of the college paper assigned him to the cow barns, the sheep house, the horse pavilion, and the animal husbandry department generally. This was a genuinely big "beat," for it took up five times as much ground and got ten times as great a legislative appropriation as the College of Liberal Arts. The agricultural student knew animals, but nevertheless his stories were dull and colorlessly written. He took all afternoon on each of them, because he had to hunt for each letter on the typewriter. Once in a while he had to ask somebody to help him hunt. "C" and "L," in particular, were

hard letters for him to find. His editor finally got pretty much annoyed at the farmer-journalist because his pieces were so uninteresting. "See here, Haskins," he snapped at him one day, "Why is it we never have anything hot from you on the horse pavilion? Here we have two hundred head of horses on this campus—more than any other university in the Western Conference except Purdue—and yet you never get any real low-down on them. Now shoot over to the horse barns and dig up something lively." Haskins shamled out and came back in about an hour; he said he had something. "Well, start it off snappily," said the editor. "Something people will read." Haskins set to work and in a couple of hours brought a sheet of typewritten paper to the desk; it was a two-hundred word story about some disease that had broken out among the horses. Its opening sentence was simple but arresting. It read: "Who has noticed the sores on the tops of the horses in the animal husbandry building?"

Ohio State was a land grant university and therefore two years of military drill was compulsory. We drilled with old Springfield rifles and studied the tactics of the Civil War even though the World War was going on at the time. At 11 o'clock each morning thousands of freshmen and sophomores used to deploy over the campus, moodily creeping up on the old chemistry building. It was good training for the kind of warfare that was waged at Shiloh but it had no connection with what was going on in Europe. Some people used to think there was German money behind it, but they didn't dare say so or they would have been thrown in jail as German spies. It was a period of muddy thought and marked, I believe, the decline of higher education in the Middle West.

As a soldier I was never any good at all. Most of the cadets were glumly indifferent soldiers, but I was no good at all. Once General Littlefield, who was commandant of the cadet corps, popped up in front of me during regimental drill and snapped, "You are the main trouble with this university!" I think he meant that my type was the main trouble with the university but he may have meant me individually. I was mediocre at drill, certainly—that is, until my senior year. By that time I had drilled longer than anybody else in the Western Conference, having failed at military at the end of each preceding year so that I had to do it all over again. I was the only senior still in uniform. The uniform which, when new, had made me look like an interurban railway conductor, now that it had become faded and too tight made me look like Bert Williams in his bell-boy act. This had a definitely bad effect on my morale. Even so, I had become by sheer practise little short of wonderful at squad manoeuvres.

One day General Littlefield picked our company out of the whole regiment and tried to get it mixed up by putting it through one movement after another as fast as we could execute them: squads right, squads left, squads on right into line, squads right about, squads left front into line, etc. In about three minutes one hundred and nine men were marching in one direction and I was marching away from them at an angle of forty degrees, all

alone. "Company, halt!" shouted General Littlefield, "That man is the only man who has it right!" I was made a corporal for my achievement.

The next day General Littlefield summoned me to his office. He was swatting flies when I went in. I was silent and he was silent too, for a long time. I don't think he remembered me or why he had sent for me, but he didn't want to admit it. He swatted some more flies, keeping his eyes on them narrowly before he let go with the swatter. "Button up your coat!" he snapped. Looking back on it now I can see that he meant me although he was looking at a fly, but I just stood there. Another fly came to rest on a paper in front of the general and began rubbing its hind legs together. The general lifted the swatter cautiously. I moved restlessly and the fly flew away. "You startled him!" barked General Littlefield, looking at me severely. I said I was sorry. "That won't help the situation!" snapped the General, with cold military logic. I didn't see what I could do except offer to chase some more flies toward his desk, but I didn't say anything. He stared out the window at the faraway figures of co-eds crossing the campus toward the library. Finally, he told me I could go. So I went. He either didn't know which cadet I was or else he forgot what he wanted to see me about. It may have been that he wished to apologize for having called me the main trouble with the university; or maybe he had decided to compliment me on my brilliant drilling of the day before and then at the last minute decided not to. I don't know. I don't think about it much any more.

THE FIGHT

by William Hazlitt

I was going down Chancery Lane, thinking to ask at Jack Randall's where the fight was to be, when looking through the glass-door of the *Hole in the Wall*, I heard a gentleman asking the same question at Mrs. Randall, as the author of *Waverley* would express it. Now Mrs. Randall stood answering the gentleman's question, with all the authenticity of the lady of the Champion of the Light Weights. Thinks I, I'll wait till this person comes out, and learn from him how it is. For to say a truth, I was not fond of going into this house of call for heroes and philosophers, ever since the owner of it (for Jack is no gentleman) threatened once upon a time to kick me out of doors for wanting a mutton-chop at his hospitable board, when the conqueror in thirteen battles was more full of *blue ruin* than of good manners. I was the more mortified at this repulse, inasmuch as I had heard Mr. James Simpkins, hosier in the Strand, one day when the character of the *Hole in the Wall* was brought in question, observe—"The house is a very good house, and the company quite genteel. I have been there myself!"

Remembering this unkind treatment of mine host, to which mine hostess was also a party, and not wishing to put her in unquiet thoughts at a time jubilant like the present, I waited at the door, when, who should issue forth but my friend Joe P——s, and, seeing him turn suddenly up Chancery Lane with that quick jerk and impatient stride which distinguish a lover of the FANCY, I said, "I'll be hanged if that fellow is not going to the fight, and is on his way to get me to go with him." So it proved in effect, and we agreed to adjourn to my lodgings to discuss measures with that cordiality which makes old friends like new, and new friends like old, on great occasions. We are cold to others only when we are dull in ourselves, and have neither thoughts nor feelings to impart to them. Give a man a topic in his head, a throb of pleasure in his heart, and he will be glad to share it with the first person he meets. Joe and I, though we seldom meet, were an *alter idem* on this memorable occasion, and had not an idea that we did not candidly impart; and "so carelessly did we fleet the time," that I wish no better, when there is another fight, than to have him for a companion on my journey down, and to return with my friend Jack Pigott, talking of what was to happen or of what did happen, with a noble subject always at hand, and liberty to digress to others whenever they offered. Indeed, on my repeating the lines from Spenser in an involuntary fit of enthusiasm,

"What more felicity can fall to creature,
Than to enjoy delight with liberty?"

my last-named ingenious friend stopped me by saying that this, translated into the vulgate, meant "*Going to see a fight.*"

Joe and I could not settle about the method of going down. He said there was a caravan, he understood, to start from Tom Belcher's at two, which would go there *right out* and back again the next day. Now, I never travel all night, and said I should get a cast to Newbury by one of the mails. Joe swore the thing was impossible, and I could only answer that I had made up my mind to it. In short, he seemed to me to waver, said he only came to see if I was going, had letters to write, a cause coming on the day after, and faintly said at parting (for I was bent on setting out that moment)—"Well, we meet at Philippi?" I made the best of my way to Piccadilly. The mail-coach stand was bare. "They are all gone," said I—"this is always the way with me—in the instant I lose the future—if I had not stayed to pour out that last cup of tea, I should have been just in time";—and cursing my folly and ill-luck together, without inquiring at the coach-office whether the mails were gone or not, I walked on in despite, and to punish my own dilatoriness and want of determination. At any rate, I would not turn back: I might get to Hounslow, or perhaps farther, to be on my road the next morning. I passed Hyde Park corner (my Rubicon), and trusted to fortune. Suddenly I heard the clattering of a Brentford stage, and the fight rushed full upon my fancy. I argued (not unwisely) that even a Brentford coachman was better company than my own thoughts (such as they were just then),

and at his invitation mounted the box with him. I immediately stated my case to him—namely, my quarrel with myself for missing the Bath or Bristol mail, and my determination to get on in consequence as well as I could, without any disparagement or insulting comparison between longer or shorter stages. It is a maxim with me that stage-coaches, and consequently stage-coachmen, are respectable in proportion to the distance they have to travel. so I said nothing on that subject to my Brentford friend. Any incipient tendency to an abstract proposition, or (as he might have construed it) to a personal reflection of this kind, was however nipped in the bud; for I had no sooner declared indignantly that I had missed the mails, than he flatly denied that they were gone along, and lo! at the instant three of them drove by in rapid, provoking, orderly succession, as if they would devour the ground before them. Here again I seemed in the contradictory situation of the man in Dryden who exclaims,

“I follow Fate, which does too hard pursue!”

If I had stopped to inquire at the White Horse Cellar, which would not have taken me a minute, I should now have been driving down the road in all the dignified unconcern and *ideal* perfection of mechanical conveyance. The Bath mail I had set my mind upon, and I had missed it, as I miss everything else, by my own absurdity, in putting the will for the deed, and aiming at ends without employing means. “Sir,” said he of the Brentford, “the Bath mail will be up presently, my brother-in-law drives it, and I will engage to stop him if there is a place empty.” I almost doubted my good genius; but, sure enough, up it drove like lightning, and stopped directly at the call of the Brentford Jehu. I would not have believed this possible, but the brother-in-law of a mail-coach driver is himself no mean man. I was transferred with out loss of time from the top of one coach to that of the other, desired the guard to pay my fare to the Brentford coachman for me as I had no change, was accommodated with a great-coat, put up my umbrella to keep off a drizzling mist, and we began to cut through the air like an arrow. The milestones disappeared one after another, the rain kept off; Tom Turtle the trainer sat before me on the coach-box, with whom I exchanged civilities as a gentleman going to the fight; the passion that had transported me an hour before was subdued to pensive regret and conjectural musing on the next day’s battle; I was promised a place inside at Reading, and upon the whole, I thought myself a lucky fellow. Such is the force of imagination! On the outside of any other coach on the 10th of December, with a Scotch mist drizzling through the cloudy moonlight air, I should have been cold, comfortless, impatient, and, no doubt, wet through; but seated on the Royal mail, I felt warm and comfortable, the air did me good, the ride did me good, I was pleased with the progress we had made, and confident that all would go well through the journey. When I got inside at Reading, I found Turtle and a stout valetudinarian, whose costume bespoke him one of the FANCY, and who had risen from a three months’ sick bed to get into the mail to see

the fight. They were intimate, and we fell into a lively discourse. My friend the trainer was confined in his topics to fighting dogs and men, to bears and badgers; beyond this he was "quite chap-fallen," had not a word to throw at a dog, or indeed very wisely fell asleep, when any other game was started. The whole art of training (I, however, learnt from him) consists in two things, exercise and abstinence, abstinence and exercise, repeated alternately and without end. A yolk of an egg with a spoonful of rum in it is the first thing in a morning, and then a walk of six miles till breakfast. This meal consists of a plentiful supply of tea and toast and beef-steaks. Then another six or seven miles till dinner-time, and another supply of solid beef or mutton with a pint of porter, and perhaps, at the utmost, a couple of glasses of sherry. Martin trains on water, but this increases his infirmity on another very dangerous side. The Gasman takes now and then a chirping glass (under the rose) to console him, during a six weeks' probation, for the absence of Mrs. Hickman—an agreeable woman, with (I understand) a pretty fortune of two hundred pounds. How matter presses on me! What stubborn things are facts! How inexhaustible is nature and art! "It is well," as I once heard Mr. Richmond observe, "to see a variety." He was speaking of cock-fighting as an edifying spectacle. I cannot deny but that one learns more of what *is* (I do not say of what *ought to be*) in this desultory mode of practical study, than from reading the same book twice over, even though it should be a moral treatise. Where was I? I was sitting at dinner with the candidate for the honours of the ring, "where good digestion waits on appetite, and health on both." Then follows an hour of social chat and native glee; and afterwards, to another breathing over healthy hill or dale. Back to supper, and then to bed, and up by six again—our hero

"Follows so the ever-running sun,
With profitable *ardour*"—

to the day that brings him victory or defeat in the green fairy circle. Is not this life more sweet than mine? I was going to say; but I will not libel any life by comparing it to mine, which is (at the date of these presents) bitter as coloquintida and the dregs of aconitum!

The invalid in the Bath mail soared a pitch above the trainer, and did not sleep so sound, because he had "more figures and more fantasies." We talked the hours away merrily. He had faith in surgery, for he had three ribs set right, that had been broken in a *turn-up* at Belcher's, but thought physicians old women, for they had no antidote in their catalogue for brandy. An indigestion is an excellent commonplace for two people that never met before. By way of ingratiating myself, I told him the story of my doctor, who, on my earnestly representing to him that I thought his regimen had done me harm, assured me that the whole pharmacopeia contained nothing comparable to the prescription he had given me; and, as a proof of its undoubted efficacy, said, that "he had had one gentleman with my complaint under his hands for the last fifteen years." This anecdote made my companion shake

the rough sides of his three great-coats with boisterous laughter; and Turtle, starting out of his sleep, swore he knew how the fight would go, for he had had a dream about it. Sure enough the rascal told us how the three first rounds went off, but "his dream" like others, "denoted a foregone conclusion." He knew his men. The moon now rose in silver state, and I ventured, with some hesitation, to point out this object of placid beauty, with the blue serene beyond, to the man of science, to which his ear he "seriously inclined," the more as it gave promise *d'un beau jour* for the morrow, and showed the ring undrenched by envious showers, arrayed in sunny smiles. Just then, all going on well, I thought on my friend Joe, whom I had left behind, and said innocently, "There was a blockhead of a fellow I left in town, who said there was no possibility of getting down by the mail, and talked of going by a caravan from Belcher's at two in the morning, after he had written some letters." "Why," said he of the lapels, "I should not wonder if that was the very person we saw running about like mad from one coach-door to another, and asking if any one had seen a friend of his, a gentleman going to the fight, whom he had missed stupidly enough by staying to write a note." "Pray, sir," said my fellow-traveller, "had he a plaid-cloak on?" "Why, no," said I, "not at the time I left him, but he very well might afterwards, for he offered to lend me one." The plaid-cloak and the letter decided the thing. Joe, sure enough, was in the Bristol mail, which preceded us by about fifty yards. This was droll enough. We had now but a few miles to our place of destination, and the first thing I did on alighting at Newbury, both coaches stopping at the same time, was to call out, "Pray is there a gentleman in that mail of the name of P—s?" "No," said Joe, borrowing something of the vein of Gilpin, "for I have just got out." "Well!" says he, "this is lucky; but you don't know how vexed I was to miss you; for," added he, lowering his voice, "do you know when I left you I went to Belcher's to ask about the caravan, and Mrs. Belcher said very obligingly, she couldn't tell about that, but there were two gentlemen who had taken places by the mail and were gone on in a landau, and she could frank us. It's a pity I didn't meet with you; we could then have got down for nothing. But *mum's the word*." It's the devil for any one to tell me a secret, for it is sure to come out in print. I do not care so much to gratify a friend, but the public ear is too great a temptation to me.

Our present business was to get beds and supper at an inn; but this was no easy task. The public-houses were full, and where you saw a light at a private house, and people poking their heads out of the casement to see what was going on, they instantly put them in and shut the window, the moment you seemed advancing with a suspicious overture for accommodation. Our guard and coachman thundered away at the outer gate of the Crown for some time without effect—such was the greater noise within; and when the doors were unbarred, and we got admittance, we found a party assembled in the kitchen round a good hospitable fire, some sleeping, others drinking,

others talking on politics and on the fight. A tall English yeoman (something like Matthews in the face, and quite as great a wag)—

“A lusty man to ben an abbot able”—

was making such a prodigious noise about rent and taxes, and the price of corn now and formerly, that he had prevented us from being heard at the gate. The first thing I heard him say was to a shuffling fellow who wanted to be off a bet for a shilling glass of brandy and water—“Confound it, man, don’t be *insipid*!” Thinks I, that is a good phrase. It was a good omen. He kept it up so all night, nor flinched with the approach of morning. He was a fine fellow, with sense, wit, and spirit, a hearty body and a joyous mind, free-spoken, frank, convivial—one of that true English breed that went with Harry the Fifth to the siege of Harfleur—“standing like greyhounds in the slips,” etc. We ordered tea and eggs (beds were soon found to be out of the question), and this fellow’s conversation was *sauce piquante*. It did one’s heart good to see him brandish his oaken towel and to hear him talk. He made mince-meat of a drunken, stupid, red-faced, quarrelsome, *frowsy* farmer, whose nose “he moralised into a thousand similes,” making it out a firebrand like Bardolph’s. “I’ll tell you what, my friend,” says he, “the landlady has only to keep you here to save fire and candle. If one was to touch your nose, it would go off like a piece of charcoal.” At this the other only grinned like an idiot, the sole variety in his purple face being his little peering grey eyes and yellow teeth, called for another glass, swore he would not stand it, and after many attempts to provoke his humorous antagonist to single combat, which the other turned off (after working him up to a ludicrous pitch of choler) with great adroitness, he fell quietly asleep with a glass of liquor in his hand, which he could not lift to his head. His laughing persecutor made a speech over him, and turning to the opposite side of the room, where they were all sleeping in the midst of this “loud and furious fun,” said—“There’s a scene, by G—d, for Hogarth to paint. I think he and Shakespeare were our two best men at copying life.” This confirmed me in my good opinion of him. Hogarth, Shakespeare, and Nature, were just enough for him (indeed for any man) to know. I said, “You read Cobbett, don’t you? At least,” says I, “you talk just as well as he writes.” He seemed to doubt this. But I said, “We have an hour to spare: if you’ll get pen, ink, and paper, and keep on talking, I’ll write down what you say; and if it doesn’t make a capital *Political Register*, I’ll forfeit my head. You have kept me alive to-night, however. I don’t know what I should have done without you.” He did not dislike this view of the thing, nor my asking if he was not about the size of Jem Belcher; and told me soon afterwards, in the confidence of friendship, that “the circumstance which had given him nearly the greatest concern in his life, was Cribb’s beating Jem after he had lost his eye by racket-playing.”—The morning dawns; that dim but yet clear light appears, which weighs like solid bars of metal on the sleepless eyelids; the guests dropped down from their chambers one by one—but it was too late

to think of going to bed now (the clock was on the stroke of seven), we had nothing for it but to find a barber's (the pole that glittered in the morning sun lighted us to his shop), and then a nine miles' march to Hungerford. The day was fine, the sky was blue, the mists were retiring from the marshy ground, the path was tolerably dry, the sitting-up all night had not done us much harm—at least the cause was good; we talked of this and that with amicable difference, roving and sipping of many subjects, but still invariably we returned to the fight. At length, a mile to the left of Hungerford, on a gentle eminence, we saw the ring surrounded by covered carts, gigs, and carriages, of which hundreds had passed us on the road; Joe gave a youthful shout, and we hastened down a narrow lane to the scene of action.

Reader, have you ever seen a fight? If not, you have a pleasure to come, at least if it is a fight like that between the Gasman and Bill Neate. The crowd was very great when we arrived on the spot; open carriages were coming up, with streamers flying and music playing, and the country-people were pouring in over hedge and ditch in all directions, to see their hero beat or be beaten. The odds were still on Gas, but only about five to four. Gully had been down to try Neate, and had backed him considerably, which was a damper to the sanguine confidence of the adverse party. About £200,000 were pending. Gas says he has lost £3000, which were promised him by different gentlemen if he had won. He had presumed too much on himself, which had made others presume on him. This spirited and formidable young fellow seems to have taken for his motto, the old maxim, that "there are three things necessary to success in life—*Impudence! Impudence! Impudence!*" It is so in matters of opinion, but not in the FANCY, which is the most practical of all things, though even here confidence is half the battle, but only half. Our friend had vapoured and swaggered too much, as if he wanted to grin and bully his adversary out of the fight. "Alas! the Bristol man was not so tamed!"—"This is the *grave-digger*" (would Tom Hickman exclaim in the moments of intoxication from gin and success, showing his tremendous right hand), "this will send many of them to their long homes; I haven't done with them yet!" Why should he—though he had licked four of the best men within the hour—why should he threaten to inflict dishonourable chastisement on my old master Richmond, a veteran going off the stage, and who has borne his sable honours meekly? Magnanimity, my dear Tom, and bravery, should be inseparable. Or why should he go up to his antagonist, the first time he ever saw him at the Fives Court, and measuring him from head to foot with a glance of contempt, as Achilles surveyed Hector, say to him, "What, are you Bill Neate? I'll knock more blood out of that great carcase of thine, this day fortnight, than you ever knock'd out of a bullock's!" It was not manly—'twas not fighter-like. If he was sure of the victory (as he was not), the less said about it the better. Modesty should accompany the FANCY as its shadow. The best men were always the best behaved. Jem Belcher, the Game Chicken (before whom the Gasman could not have lived) were civil, silent men. So is Cribb; so is Tom Belcher, the most elegant of sparrers, and

not a man for every one to take by the nose. I enlarged on this topic in the mail (while Turtle was asleep), and said very wisely (as I thought) that impertinence was a part of no profession. A boxer was bound to beat his man, but not to thrust his fist, either actually or by implication, in every one's face. Even a highwayman, in the way of trade, may blow out your brains, but if he uses foul language at the same time, I should say he was no gentleman. A boxer, I would infer, need not be a blackguard or a coxcomb, more than another. Perhaps I press this point too much on a fallen man—Mr. Thomas Hickman has by this time learnt that first of all lessons, "That man was made to mourn." He has lost nothing by the late fight but his presumption; and that every man may do as well without! By an over-display of this quality, however, the public had been prejudiced against him, and the *knowing ones* were taken in. Few but those who had bet on him wished Gas to win. With my own prepossessions on the subject, the result of the 11th of December appeared to me as fine a piece of poetical justice as I had ever witnessed. The difference of weight between the two combatants (14 stones to 12) was nothing to the sporting men. Great, heavy, clumsy, long-armed Bill Neate kicked the beam in the scale of the Gasman's vanity. The amateurs were frightened at his big words, and thought they would make up for the difference of six feet and five feet nine. Truly, the FANCY are not men of imagination. They judge of what has been, and cannot conceive of anything that is to be. The Gasman had won hitherto; therefore he must bear a man half as big again as himself—and that to a certainty. Besides, there are as many feuds, factions, prejudices, pedantic notions in the FANCY as in the state or in the schools. Mr. Gully is almost the only cool, sensible man among them, who exercises an unbiassed discretion, and is not a slave to his passions in these matters. But enough of reflections, and to our tale. The day, as I have said, was fine for a December morning. The grass was wet, and the ground miry, and ploughed up with multitudinous feet, except that, within the ring itself, there was a spot of virgin-green, closed in and unprofaned by vulgar tread, that shone with dazzling brightness in the mid-day sun. For it was now noon, and we had an hour to wait. This is the trying time. It is then the heart sickens, as you think what the two champions are about, and how short a time will determine their fate. After the first blow is struck, there is no opportunity for nervous apprehensions; you are swallowed up in the immediate interest of the scene—but

"Between the acting of a dreadful thing
And the first motion, all the interim is
Like a phantasma, or a hideous dream."

I found it so as I felt the sun's rays clinging to my back, and saw the white wintry clouds sink below the verge of the horizon. "So," I thought, "my fairest hopes have faded from my sight!—so will the Gasman's glory, or that of his adversary, vanish in an hour." The *swells* were parading in their white box-coats; the outer ring was cleared with some bruises on the heads and

shins of the rustic assembly (for the *cockneys* had been distanced by the sixty-six miles); the time drew near; I had got a good stand; a bustle, a buzz, ran through the crowd; and from the opposite side entered Neate, between his second and bottle-holder. He rolled along, swathed in his loose great-coat, his knock-knees bending under his huge bulk; and, with a modest, cheerful air, threw his hat into the ring. He then just looked round, and begun quietly to undress; when from the other side there was a similar rush and an opening made, and the Gasman came forward with a conscious air of anticipated triumph, too much like the cock-of-the-walk. He strutted about more than became a hero, sucked oranges with a supercilious air, and threw away the skin with a toss of his head and went up and looked at Neate, which was an act of supererogation. The only sensible thing he did was, as he strode away from the modern Ajax, to fling out his arms, as if he wanted to try whether they would do their work that day. By this time they had stripped, and presented a strong contrast in appearance. If Neate was like Ajax, "with Atlantean shoulders, fit to bear" the pugilistic reputation of all Bristol, Hickman might be compared to Diomed, light, vigorous, elastic, and his back glistened in the sun, as he moved about, like a panther's hide. There was now a dead pause—attention was awe-struck. Who at that moment, big with a great event, did not draw his breath short—did not feel his heart throb? All was ready. They tossed up for the sun, and the Gasman won. They were led up to the *scratch*—shook hands, and went at it.

In the first round every one thought it was all over. After making play a short time, the Gasman flew at his adversary like a tiger, struck five blows in as many seconds, three first, and then following him as he staggered back, two more, right and left, and down he fell, a mighty ruin. There was a shout, and I said, "There is no standing this." Neate seemed like a lifeless lump of flesh and bone, round which the Gasman's blows played with the rapidity of electricity or lightning, and you imagined he would only be lifted up to be knocked down again. It was as if Hickman held a sword or a fire in that right hand of his and directed it against an unarmed body. They met again, and Neate seemed, not cowed, but particularly cautious. I saw his teeth clenched together and his brows knit close against the sun. He held out both his arms at full length straight before him, like two sledge hammers, and raised his left an inch or two higher. The Gasman could not get over this guard—they struck mutually and fell, but without advantage on either side. It was the same in the next round; but the balance of power was thus restored—the fate of the battle was suspended. No one could tell how it would end. This was the only moment in which opinion was divided; for, in the next, the Gasman aiming a mortal blow at his adversary's neck, with his right hand, and failing from the length he had to reach, the other returned it with his left at full swing, planted a tremendous blow on his cheek-bone and eyebrow, and made a red ruin of that side of his face. The Gasman went down and there was another shout—a roar of triumph as the waves of fortune rolled tumultuously from side to side. This was a settler. Hickman

got up, and “grinned horrible a ghastly smile,” yet he was evidently dashed in his opinion of himself; it was the first time he had ever been so punished; all one side of his face was perfect scarlet, and his right eye was closed in dingy blackness, as he advanced to the fight, less confident, but still determined. After one or two rounds, not receiving another such remembrancer, he rallied and went at it with his former impetuosity. But in vain. His strength had been weakened—his blows could not tell at such a distance—he was obliged to fling himself at his adversary, and could not strike from his feet; and almost as regularly as he flew at him with his right hand, Neate warded the blow, or drew back out of its reach, and felled him with the return of his left. There was little cautious sparring—no half-hits—no tapping and trifling, none of the *petit-maitreship* of the art—they were almost all knock-down blows:—the fight was a good stand-up fight. The wonder was the half-minute time. If there had been a minute or more allowed between each round, it would have been intelligible how they should by degrees recover strength and resolution; but to see two men smashed to the ground, smeared with gore, stunned, senseless, the breath beaten out of their bodies; and then, before you recover from the shock, to see them rise up with new strength and courage, stand ready to inflict or receive mortal offence, and rush upon each other “like two clouds over the Caspian”—this is the most astonishing thing of all:—this is the high and heroic state of man! From this time forward the event became more certain every round; and about the twelfth it seemed as if it must have been over. Hickman generally stood with his back to me; but in the scuffle, he had changed positions, and Neate just then made a tremendous lunge at him, and hit him full in the face. It was doubtful whether he would fall backwards or forwards; he hung suspended for a minute or two, and then fell back, throwing his hands in the air, and with his face lifted up to the sky. I never saw anything more terrific than his aspect just before he fell. All traces of life, of natural expression, were gone from him. His face was like a human skull, a death’s head spouting blood. The eyes were filled with blood, the nose streamed with blood, the mouth gaped blood. He was not like an actual man, but like a preternatural, spectral appearance, or like one of the figures in Dante’s *Inferno*. Yet he fought on after this for several rounds, still striking the first desperate blow, and Neate standing on the defensive, and using the same cautious guard to the last, as if he had still all his work to do; and it was not till the Gasman was so stunned in the seventeenth or eighteenth round, that his senses forsook him, and he could not come to time, that the battle was declared over. Ye who despise the FANCY, do something to show as much *pluck*, or as much self-possession as this, before you assume a superiority which you have never given a single proof of by any one action in the whole course of your lives!—When the Gasman came to himself, the first words he uttered were, “Where am I? What is the matter?” “Nothing is the matter, Tom—you have lost the battle, but you are the bravest man alive.” And Jackson whispered to him, “I am collecting a purse for you, Tom.”—Vain sounds, and unheard at that

moment! Neate instantly went up and shook him cordially by the hand, and seeing some old acquaintance, began to flourish with his fists, calling out, "Ah! you always said I couldn't fight—what do you think now?" But all in good-humour, and without any appearance of arrogance; only it was evident Bill Neate was pleased that he had won the fight. When it was over, I asked Cribb if he did not think it was a good one? He said, "*Pretty well!*" The carrier-pigeons now mounted into the air, and one of them flew with the news of her husband's victory to the bosom of Mrs. Neate. Alas, for Mrs. Hickman!

Mais au revoir, as Sir Fopling Flutter says. I went down with Toms; I returned with Jack Pigott, whom I met on the ground. Toms is a rattle-brain; Pigott is a sentimentalist. Now under favour, I am a sentimentalist too—therefore I say nothing, but that the interest of the excursion did not flag as I came back. Pigott and I marched along the causeway leading from Hungerford to Newbury, now observing the effect of a brilliant sun on the tawny meads or moss-coloured cottages, now exulting in the fight, now digressing to some topic of general and elegant literature. My friend was dressed in character for the occasion, or like one of the FANCY; that is, with a double portion of great-coats, clogs, and overhauls; and just as we had agreed with a couple of country-lads to carry his superfluous wearing-apparel to the next town, we were overtaken by a return post-chaise, into which I got, Pigott preferring a seat on the bar. There were two strangers already in the chaise, and on their observing they supposed I had been to the fight, I said I had, and concluded they had done the same. They appeared, however, a little shy and sore on the subject; and it was not till after several hints dropped and questions put, that it turned out that they had missed it. One of these friends had undertaken to drive the other there in his gig: they had set out, to make sure work, the day before at three in the afternoon. The owner of the one-horse vehicle scorned to ask his way, and drove right on to Bagshot, instead of turning off at Hounslow: there they stopped all night, and set off the next day across the country to Reading, from whence they took coach, and got down within a mile or two of Hungerford, just half-an-hour after the fight was over. This might be safely set down as one of the miseries of human life. We parted with these two gentlemen who had been to see the fight, but had returned as they went, at Wolhamston where we were promised beds (an irresistible temptation, for Pigott had passed the preceding night at Hungerford as we had done at Newbury), and we turned into an old bow-windowed parlour with a carpet and a snug fire; and after devouring a quantity of tea, toast, and eggs, sat down to consider, during an hour of philosophic leisure, what we should have for supper. In the midst of an Epicurean deliberation between a roasted fowl and mutton chops with mashed potatoes, we were interrupted by an inroad of Goths and Vandals—*O procul este profani*—not real flash-men, but interlopers, noisy pretenders, butchers from Tothill Fields, brokers from Whitechapel, who called immediately for pipes and tobacco, hoping it would not be disagreeable to

the gentlemen, and began to insist that it was *a cross*. Pigott withdrew from the smoke and noise into another room, and left me to dispute the point with them for a couple of hours *sans intermission* by the dial. The next morning we rose refreshed; and on observing that Jack had a pocket volume in his hand, in which he read in the intervals of our discourse, I inquired what it was, and learned to my particular satisfaction that it was a volume of the *New Eloise*. Ladies, after this, will you contend that a love for the FANCY is incompatible with the cultivation of sentiment?—We jogged on as before, my friend setting me up in a genteel drab great-coat and green silk handkerchief (which I must say became me exceedingly), and after stretching our legs for a few miles, and seeing Jack Randall, Ned Turner, and Scroggins pass on the top of one of the Bath coaches, we engaged with the driver of the second to take us to London for the usual fee. I got inside, and found three other passengers. One of them was an old gentleman with an aquiline nose, powdered hair, and a pig-tail, who looked as if he had played many a rubber at the Bath rooms. I said to myself, he is very like Mr. Windham; I wish he would enter into conversation, that I might hear what fine observations would come from those finely-turned features. However, nothing passed, till, stopping to dine at Reading, some inquiry was made by the company about the fight, and I gave (as the reader may believe) an eloquent and animated description of it. When we got into the coach again, the old gentleman, after a graceful exordium, said he had, when a boy, been to a fight between the famous Broughton and George Stevenson, who was called the *Fighting Coachman*, in the year 1770, with the late Mr. Windham. This beginning flattered the spirit of prophecy with me, and riveted my attention. He went on—“George Stevenson was coachman to a friend of my father’s. He was an old man when I saw him, some years afterwards. He took hold of his own arm and said, ‘there was muscle here once, but now it is no more than this young gentleman’s.’ He added, ‘well, no matter; I have been here long, I am willing to go hence, and I hope I have done no more harm than another man.’ Once,” said my unknown companion, “I asked him if he had ever beat Broughton? He said Yes; that he had fought with him three times, and the last time he fairly beat him, though the world did not allow it. ‘I’ll tell you how it was, master. When the seconds lifted us up in the last round, we were so exhausted that neither of us could stand, and we fell upon one another, and as Master Broughton fell uppermost, the mob gave it in his favour, and he was said to have won the battle. But the fact was, that as his second (John Cuthbert) lifted him up, he said to him, ‘I’ll fight no more, I’ve had enough’; which,” says Stevenson, “you know gave me the victory. And to prove to you that this was the case, when John Cuthbert was on his death-bed, and they asked him if there was anything on his mind which he wished to confess, he answered, ‘Yes, that there was one thing he wished to set right, for that certainly Master Stevenson won that last fight with Master Broughton; for he whispered him as he lifted him up in the last round of all, that he had had enough.’” This,” said the Bath gentleman, “was a bit of human nature”;

and I have written this account of the fight on purpose that it might not be lost to the world. He also stated as a proof of the candour of mind in this class of men, that Stevenson acknowledged that Broughton could have beat him in his best day; but that he (Broughton) was getting old in their last rencounter. When we stopped in Piccadilly, I wanted to ask the gentleman some questions about the late Mr. Windham, but had not courage. I got out, resigned my coat and green silk handkerchief to Pigott (loth to part with these ornaments of life), and walked home in high spirits.

P.S.—Joe called upon me the next day, to ask me if I did not think the fight was a complete thing. I said I thought it was. I hope he will relish my account of it.

ADOLESCENCE¹

by Floyd Dell

At school, I had gained the reputation of being 'a shark' at my studies. Always I had been clumsy in mathematics; but one day my algebra teacher made a mistake while demonstrating a problem on the black-board; and in my eagerness to set her right, I went up to her, took the chalk from her fingers, and worked out the problem swiftly and correctly; and after that, I had no excuse for thinking myself stupid about algebra. My Socialist reading gave me a clue to history which made me remember and understand my history lessons. I did not think of myself as a good student, and I am not sure that I was; but that was what I was supposed to be. I did not study much, and spent most of my study hours in school revising my poems.

One day the teacher in charge of the study-hour, Mr. Myers, my history teacher, caught my eye and beckoned me to his desk. At the same time he made a gesture which indicated that I was to bring along what I was writing. A long-forgotten memory of that cruel and stupid principal at Barry flashed into my mind, and for a moment I was overcome with sick, childish fear. But my history teacher was a genial and friendly soul. "A poem?" he asked. "Yes, sir," I said. "May I see it?" I handed it over. "Very good, I should say," my teacher remarked, after reading it; and he asked: "May I keep it till tomorrow?" He added that he wanted to show it to the English teacher. I went back to my seat wondering.

The next day I found out. The history teacher asked me to stay a moment after the class period, and explained to me that the school was sending a volume, representative of the school work, to the World's Fair at St. Louis. He had heard that I wrote poetry. He had shown my poem to the English teacher, who was his room-mate, and they had both thought that it would be an excellent idea if I would write a poem for the volume. Of course, the poem

¹ From Floyd Dell, *Homecoming*. By permission of Farrar and Rinehart.

ought if possible to have some relation to the work of the school; and he himself thought it would be fine if I would write a historical poem.

I went away from that interview in a most agreeably fluttered state. I had never dreamed of any of my poems being important to anyone besides myself; not important, exactly, but useful—think of that!—and a credit to the school. As for a historical poem, I had never thought of writing such a thing; but if my history teacher thought I could, why, he must not be disappointed.

That afternoon I hurried to the library and read hastily and excitedly a volume on the Moors in Spain. That, I had decided, was to be the subject of my historical poem. Then, with my head full of pictures of the marble courts that were to be splashed with blood, the flower-beds that were to be trampled, the busy looms that were to be smashed to bits by savage Christian hatred, the scrolls that were to be flung into bonfires, all the pagan beauty and joy and wisdom that were to be destroyed, I composed, as I walked the streets, a bitterly ironical 'Ballad of the Moors' Expulsion.' It was, indeed, beneath all its historical guise, a poem about myself—though I was unaware of it—a poem about my having to go to work in a factory—the triumph of reality over my dreams. The paradise destroyed by Christian hate was my own paradise of poetry.

Where fountains toss their flashing spray,
And roses glow serene,
Where lute and viol charm the day,
And minstrels chant unseen,
Vultures shall quarrel o'er their prey—
Ravens and beasts unclean.

I enjoyed the praise of my history teacher, and I had a private view of the World's Fair Book, an imposing volume in green tooled leather, containing an array of maps, drawings of flowers and birds, and pages of Greek, among all of which my own neatly lettered poem still seemed to have an air of distinction of its own.

Miss Freeman, the librarian of the public library, I had seen from afar—as she came and went about the library with a light step, disappearing all too quickly into that secluded and sacred region, her private office. I knew her name and her official position; but to me she was not so much the librarian as the spirit, half familiar and half divine, which haunted this place of books. She might have been evoked by my imagination, even as were the shining spirits of wood and stream in an earlier day. She had, like these books of which she was the guardian, a spirit above the rush and stress of common life. Something in her light step, her serene glance, personified for me the spirit of these literary treasures; she was their spirit, made visible in radiant cool flesh. More lately I had noted her quick smile, and heard her impetuous soft speech. But I had never thought of her as quite belonging to the world of reality. And now suddenly she appeared to me among the book-

stacks, holding out her hand, saying, "You are Floyd Dell, aren't you? I am Marilla Freeman."

Marilla Freeman was an extraordinarily beautiful young woman, tall and slender, wide-browed, with soft dark hair, grey-blue eyes, a tender whimsical mouth, and a lovely voice—an idealist, and also a practical person, who immediately took charge of my destinies. I fell in love with her deeply, and became from the first moment of our friendship involved in a battle of wills with her—a battle not mitigated by the great affection we had for one another. From her point of view, the situation was a simple one: here was a young poet, who, besides encouragement, needed to learn conscious control of his art; and who needed friends among those who were interested in writers and writing. This very wise program was rebelled against by me, violently protested at every point, but on every point yielded to and carried out. The fact was that for the first time I had met a person capable of bossing me; and though the bossing was done with angelic sweetness and patience, it was implacable. I resented it bitterly that a goddess should stoop to these practical matters. I wished to remain in the enchanted circle of her affection; I wanted her to be a kind of mother-goddess. And she, with all the powers thus given her, was very gently and very firmly and very wisely pushing me out into the world of reality.

I had already accepted the fact that I must live in the world of reality; but I always thought of that as earning a living in a factory. Writing was a part of an ideal world—it had nothing to do with making a living. My intention was to get a factory job and then write for my own pleasure. But, as this program of mine was never stated, it could not be discussed. Nor was Marilla's program ever stated—she took it for granted that a writer must want to make a living by his writing; it was unnecessary, she thought, to argue about that—it was only necessary to suggest ways and means. We were at cross-purposes. And the cross-purposes were further complicated by the fact that the only kind of writing I was doing was poetry—which I did not ever for a moment believe I could make a living with, and which I would rather be allowed to practise without any thought of ever selling it. This attitude appealed to Marilla as an idealist, but it seemed to imply an unworldly dedication of myself to poetry as an art—the rôle of 'genius,' in fact, which I definitely rejected. I obeyed her commands—she did not know they were commands, since they were only friendly suggestions, offers and questions; but I obeyed these commands chiefly because they were difficult and painful, and because I had adopted as a maxim for my guidance a sentence from Emerson to the effect that whatever one was afraid to do was the thing for him to do.

As to learning conscious control of my art, that was something against which I had at first all the indignant and mournful rebellion of the amateur who produces works of art by a mysterious unconscious process which he does not understand. But in an elderly and sweet poet-journalist, Charles Eugene Banks,—tall, Windsor-tied, with hair that dripped over his eyes,—I found a critical intelligence which I could respect, and, with his permission, exploited

it ruthlessly; he taught me patiently how to criticise my own work, and how to revise it—a lesson of more use to me later in prose than then in poetry, and one for which I came to be even more grateful than I had been at the time.

Whatever might have been the attitude of the church crowd back in Quincy toward a talented youngster—if he had not suddenly turned Atheist—the attitude of my new friends in Davenport was unmistakable. There was a plan, of which I did not hear until several years later, to see me through college. A man known for his generous assistance in helping young people of promise in that way was invited to dinner to meet me. I did not know what was afoot, but I remember the evening very well. The subject of a college education in general was brought up, and I was asked what I thought about it. I, from my Socialist ramparts, blasted college education with a withering fire of criticism. My tactful hostess asked me if I did not think colleges were of value if one were going to be a writer. I demolished the pretensions of colleges in that respect also, pointing out that the actualities of life were the only school in which one could learn to write. The talk then turned to something else.

Having once had a job from which I had not been fired, that, according to the customs of the unskilled working class, was my trade. I was a 'prentice candy-maker. And it was in a candy factory that I now worked in Davenport. This was a large factory, floor above floor. I ran a 'vacuum pan' on one of the upper floors, getting there in the morning at half-past six, so as to have a batch of candy cooked and ready at seven. I fed a copper monstrosity with sugar and glucose in due quantites, so many times a day, and watched a recalcitrant steam-pump that kept the thing from exploding. The heat was regulated by a cock; when I hastily reached up to turn it, my bare arm was lucky if it didn't get burned on a steam pipe; it was hard to remember that steam pipe, and my arm was covered with half-healed burns. When a batch of candy was cooked, it had to be 'pulled' while hot—thrown over metal hooks in the wooden pillars, caught and thrown back, as in taffy pulling, only on a larger scale. It had to be pulled with the bare hands, and the first batch left eight blisters, one on each finger-tip; the next batch took off the skin from the blisters; after a week, callous skin had grown over the raw places. When more sugar and glucose were needed, I brought it from the cellar. I weighed a hundred and twenty-five pounds, and it was hard to pry a barrel of glucose weighing three hundred pounds out of a great pyramidal tier of such barrels that reached to the ceiling, without being mashed when the others came thundering down; and it was all I could do to roll that barrel up a three-inch step on its way to the elevator. At each day's end, the spilt sugar was swept from the dirty floor and put aside in a barrel of such sweepings, to be used in making horehound candy. On Saturday the floor was cleaned with hot water, spades and hoes; and then I had to scour my copper vessels clean and shiny with a rag soaked in tartaric acid, which got into my

unhealed burns and scratches, hurting like hell-fire; and into my eyes, when I lay underneath the copper monster scrubbing its belly—but the acid, diluted with tears, lost its strength. Blinded and weeping, but rather pleased that I could stand it, I lay there, scrubbing the copper clean. The two candy-makers for whom I cooked were called 'Elephant' and 'Dutch'; I rather think it was I who gave 'Elephant' his name. The first week I was gravely told that it was the custom to 'wet' a new pair of overalls; this, it was explained, meant that the owner stood drinks for the crowd. "The custom," I said with equal gravity, "shall not be allowed to fall into innocuous desuetude." This was taken, as it was meant, as humor, and 'Elephant' went around repeating it. Before long, the phrase became 'knock-kneed steweytood', and was understood to refer to the clumsiness of the person to whom it was addressed. This transformation was assisted by my mispronunciation of the word 'desuetude'; my knowledge of words had been gained by eye and not by ear; many of the words which I used were ones which I had never heard spoken aloud. When I treated my fellow-workers, I did not know the ceremonial, but began to swallow my beer hastily, not liking the bitter taste, but not wishing to show it. "Well, here's looking!" said 'Elephant' hastily, and the candy-makers drank. When 'Elephant' proposed another round, I hastily hurried away.

One evening in that fall of 1904 there was a Socialist meeting on a downtown street-corner; and Michael Kennedy, who had not shown up at the Colored Baptist Church that spring, occupied the soap-box. I was in the edges of the crowd, an enthusiastic seventeen-year-old listener to Comrade Kennedy's speech, which told, among other things, of the growing forces of the revolutionary working class throughout the world, mentioning with especial pride the great German Social-Democratic Party. . . . Taking advantage of some pause, a burly stranger asked a courteous question—whether the speaker had ever been in Germany. The speaker had not; and it appeared that the burly stranger had, and had become well acquainted with the workings of the Social-Democratic party organization, and was willing to tell something about it, if requested. The invitation was heartily extended, and the burly stranger mounted the soap-box.

The German Social-Democratic Party, he said, was indeed a large and very efficient organization. But, he went on to say, it was not a revolutionary organization, and the Socialists here ought to know what it was like. It was a liberal and reform party, something like the Democratic Party in the United States. It had no hope of any revolution, nor any belief in one. At this point, Comrade Kennedy, who had been making agitated interruptions, mounted the soap-box beside him, and denounced him for the trickery by which he had gained possession of it. The burly stranger announced that he would continue his remarks on the opposite corner for all who cared to hear him, and then courteously gave the soap-box back to Comrade Kennedy. The amused crowd followed the burly stranger to the opposite corner, where

another soap-box was quickly set up for him; and Comrade Kennedy found himself addressing only the dispirited committee of five or six who were in charge of the meeting. It was a poor evening for the Davenport Socialists.

But it was to be a fine evening for me. I maintained my stand among the faithful few, until Comrade Kennedy gave up his attempt to win back the crowd and bitterly went away. The rest of us joined the crowd at the other corner, and I listened in indignation to the malicious libels which were being uttered against my German Socialist comrades. The speaker then went on to discuss and confute Socialist theory. I was quite familiar with the Communist Manifesto, with Engels' 'Socialism, Utopian and Scientific,' and other small books in red paper covers; and I had read some of the more readable parts of 'Capital.' When the speaker gave something as Marx's view, referring to 'Capital,' I was quite sure it was not there, and dashed to the public library, a block away. Back I came breathlessly with Karl Marx's 'Capital' under my arm. I tried to break up this fellow's meeting with questions, as he had broken up the other, but he ignored me. Not until he had finished did I have a chance to challenge his statements, and offer him 'Capital' to find his proof in if he could; he smiled, and declined the opportunity. Furious, I told him he had lied about Marx; he snubbed me casually, and went away, leaving me in my chagrin.

But a big, florid man from the group of the Socialist faithful came over and talked to me; and presently, to my delight, I found myself invited to accompany the group to Turner hall for a glass of beer. I sat at a large table with five men who believed in another kind of world than the one we lived in, and were helping to bring it about—a world of justice and beauty and order. I drank beer with them. Beer, before that, had been a bitter drink; but now it was flavored with the splendor of talk and ideas. Afterward I walked with the big man to the place where he lived, and he asked me to drop in to see him the next evening. So began my great friendship with Fred Feuchter—Fritz, as I was proud to call him. He was a mail-carrier, a big, florid, dynamic man, large-minded and eloquent, and wiser in great things and small than anyone I had ever known.

The Socialist local, on his assurance, took me in as a member, though I was still a year too young by the rules. I thought the meetings dull, and no one disputed that; I was put on a program committee, and the meetings became lively, for after all I did know how to run a club. As fall turned to winter, I worked overtime at the factory, till nine; and I would hurry on the Friday evenings of our meetings from the factory to Turner hall, to be in time to take part in some discussion, or contribute an essay to the program. Our meetings had a large attendance, now that 'business' was not droned out boringly at indefinite length; wives came with their Socialist husbands, and a few Socialist girls showed up from high school. We discussed ideas, and my friend Fred Feuchter shone in that. If the energies of the Socialist local were, under the influence of my youthful enthusiasm, turned in cultural directions, there were none the less, and possibly more, votes

for Eugene V. Debs—who was, I suppose, the candidate that year. I distributed literature at factories, and took a hand in odd jobs during the campaign. My friend Fred Feuchter had helped me magnificently in my program activities; and gradually I became his lieutenant in the practical and tactical management of the local. I discovered in myself a capacity for faithful henchmanship under an able leader, with no poetic shrinking from harsh measures.

A young enthusiast had his chance to try his hand at anything. The youngest convert may aspire to leadership, and often does; but I never did. I did try, and fail, to be an efficient impersonal cog in the Party organization. I was financial secretary for a while; and it is doubtful if they ever did get the books straightened out afterward. It was conceded that I was better in writing platforms and manifestos than in keeping track of vouchers.

My friendship with Fred Feuchter was the most important thing that had happened in my life. I had found a man whom I truly admired, and wished to follow, a man who had wisdom and courage, a man—and the first man—whose advice I could ask about anything. Not that I asked much advice: which was a good thing, for no human being could have been as infallible as I deemed my friend Fritz to be. But I learned many things from him of the greatest importance in the conduct of life. And it is interesting to me to note that these things did not concern ideals; I had read the same little red books that he had, already, and my ideals needed no improvement. What I learned from him were practical, sensible ways of dealing with the world—attitudes, rather than specific things, and really but simple common-sense. But common-sense was what I most profoundly lacked, and these simple acquisitions of wisdom were of prime importance to me. If one knows many recondite things, but does not know enough to go in when it rains, then that is a great piece of learning. Under his influence I began to learn not to attach to situations emotional values which were not there for the other persons involved; to live as though the outside world were real, whether I liked it or not; and not to pre-judge life, but to take it as it came and see it as it was. My father, no doubt, might have said to me: 'You have to consider the other fellow's point of view'; 'Facts are facts, you can't get around that'; and 'Don't cross your bridges before you come to them, my boy'—but these maxims would have carried no weight, they would have been suspect; yet these, not the maxims but the attitudes, were what I learned from my friend. He, at least, had no axe of respectability to grind when, after considering me in the light of the phrase 'intellectual proletarian', decided that I was more intellectual than proletarian, and would—he didn't undertake to say how—have a much better chance to make a living by using my brains than my hands; I would have less skilled competition in the one field than in the other, he assured me.

Since this was the first time anybody had ever taken serious note of my belief that I had to earn a living in factory work, his consideration of, and dismissal of, this belief was impressive. What my 'bourgeois' friends—I knew that blessed word 'bourgeois' now—what they had tried to assure me was that I

might have a great career as a writer; what he conveyed to me was that I didn't have a dog's chance as a factory worker.

I was, in fact, after the Christmas rush, fired from the factory. I got work in a job-printing shop, at a hand-press; but I had some objection to running the normal risk of having my right hand crushed to a mash in the iron jaws of the machine (my eldest brother had just lost part of another finger at the sash-and-door factory, leaving him a total of four whole fingers and one whole thumb on both hands); and I was transferred to the lithographing department. There it was my duty to feed beer-labels into a bronzing machine. I had also to breathe bronze-dust for eight hours a day. I became rather bitter about a civilization which could find no better task for a youth than that; a civilization in which the gilt on beer-labels—Very good, suggested Fred Feuchter, for a poem. 'But *you*—quit! Your family will not starve.' That was true; I had never thought of it that way. I did quit. It was now spring. I put on my best suit, and went to look for a job. Pausing to look at the new printing press in the windows of the Times, the idea occurred to me that I might get a job washing the ink off the rollers, or something like that. I went in. By one of those coincidences which make real life so utterly unlike realistic fiction, there had been, in the edition I had just seen run off, an advertisement for a cub reporter. It was supposed that I had come in answer to this advertisement, and I was sent to the city room, where I was given the job and told to report in the morning.

Although my friend Fritz had refused to prophesy the way in which I would be able to make a living by using my brains, this was the answer so pat that I felt as though he had not only pulled me out of a factory but pushed me into a newspaper office.

City editors are kind to cub reporters, or so I found mine. When no news was turned up on my 'beat,' 'J. C.' gave me an assignment. It was to find out about a Jewish holiday celebration; and as I knew nothing about Jewish holidays, I looked them up in the office encyclopedia, and so was able to ask intelligent questions of Rabbi Fineshriber, and write an intelligent piece about the event. Then I was sent to report the Rabbi's sermon; he had read my piece, and he invited me to come home afterward with himself and his wife and have a glass of beer and some conversation. So I made two friends; and I liked the Rabbi's sermons so well that I became a sort of member of his congregation, which consisted to a considerable extent of Gentiles, Socialists, Atheists and other heretics. The Rabbi was the best speaker I had ever heard, and the best orator I ever was to hear.

But cub reporters are on trial; and after a month I was fired; the proprietor had decided that I had no 'nose for news,' and that this was not what I ought to be doing. When other employers had made similar decisions about me in the past, I had always rather agreed with them. But if a newspaper was not the place for me, what was? The proprietor, if he knew, had not confided that to me. I was hit very hard. But I had two weeks' notice; and I decided

to 'show them'—and to *make* them give me the job back, damn them! I began to turn in 'human interest stories' at the rate of two or three a day. Before the two weeks were up I had found a woman and several sick and dying children at one of the railway stations, with a story such that, when I asked 'J.C.' how much space I could have for it, he answered solemnly, "Seven columns." I did write about two columns, and the presses were held up for the last paragraph. I had my job back. Life was incredibly like the Horatio Alger stories I had read in my childhood; but upon second thought, no—his heroes had never got ahead by sheer disrespect for their employer's opinions. It was more like 'Frank on a Gunboat'. 'Damn the torpedoes!' cried Farragut, and in a rain of shot and shell we swept past the rebel batteries to victory. . . . At any rate, life was not at all like realistic fiction, that was clear.

Nevertheless, after the glow of triumph had passed, the memory of this incident served as a warning that my hold upon this job, and upon the profession of reporting, was insecure. This was a job in a civilization which was not my civilization; not the exercise of my best capacities, but meeting the needs of newspaperdom, was my task; and it might be as irrelevant to anything I thought important as the gilt on beer-labels; it might, later if not now, be as contrary to my sense of decency as the job of making horehound candy out of sugar and dirt swept from the factory floor. To what extent had I anything to offer that a newspaper would pay money for? 'Human interest stories'—that was about all. My job hung by one thread; and that thread might be cut at any moment. I had, in fact, no future to look forward to. But I had a very interesting present.

I now lived several exciting lives. I was a Socialist, active in the local, and imaginatively stimulated by news of revolutionary uprisings in Russia; a poet in spite of myself, accidentally producing poems which were thought salable to magazines; a dramatic critic, writing reviews of plays at the German theater—not that I understood German, but that I liked writing dramatic criticism; a student of my favorite subjects at the public library; a friend, with golden hours to spend with Fred Feuchter, and Marilla Freeman, and the Fineshribers; and a newspaper reporter. At times the poet in me (for the Socialist did not mind such things) rebelled inwardly against going up to strangers in railroad stations and (tip hat) saying firmly and pleasantly and very rapidly: 'I beg your pardon I represent the Davenport Times will you please tell me where you are going. And what is your name please. S-m-i-t-h is that right? Mrs. H. J.? Thank you, and your address? 1-4-5-2 Main street, is that right? And you are going to meet somebody in Walcott. How is the name spelled? And you will stay how long? *Thank* you very much!'—tip hat; on to the next; forty people this train; over to the other station; eight trains today;—there's a bunch of society people seeing a girl off to college, they'll only snub you for butting in (and right enough they should), but here's the Old Man watching you, he'll give you hell if you don't tackle them—so carry the message to Garcia; what's anybody's privacy, what's your self-respect? nothing, the world's work must be done, and this is it, a perfectly

fair sample of the kind of world we've always had and the kind of work that must be done in it, you get your pay envelope every week, don't you? you ought to be damn glad you're not breathing bronze dust—anyway, these poor fools want to get their silly names in the paper; and I can make them come across even if they don't want to, it's a technique and I've learned it, I can stick my nose into anybody's business without a blush, I'm a newspaperman, damn your eyes. . . .

In addition to these lives, a youth of eighteen is, very naturally, having some kind of love life. Perhaps it was some notions imbibed from my earlier Nihilist reading which set up a taboo in my mind upon Socialist girls, as if they were my sisters; I did not let myself fall in love with the girl comrades whose companionship I enjoyed. But on some evenings I stayed on duty late in the city office, and became enchanted with the warm friendly voice of the telephone operator on night duty in the telephone office. With nothing to do except read a little proof, I would neglect the 'History of American Class Struggles' that I had brought, and pass the hours in a long conversation with the night operator. When a call had to be put through she would tell me, and I would hang up; a minute later, the bell would ring, and our conversation would go on. And I, who had never had the art of small talk, who conversed, in however lively a way, always upon serious matters, and to whom the faculty of 'kidding the girls' was as alien as ventriloquism, became somehow an expert kidder. With airy nothings that I had not dreamed I should ever have at my command, the hours of the night glided by. And at last the time came when I asked for a date and was granted one.

At the hour appointed, I was at the counter of the ice-cream parlor most frequented by youth and beauty. I think I wore a red carnation in my button-hole, so as to be recognized. I waited expectantly, but no girl came. I waited half an hour—three quarters. Then two pretty girls strolled slowly by, looking in; a moment later, they had turned and were strolling past in the other direction. I rose from my stool at the counter. One of the girls squealed to the other, "There he is!" and both girls burst into peals of giggles, and fled around the corner.

I did not call that girl up again. My conversation lost from its range some airy touches it never recovered. And I have never liked using the telephone, since.

But that was not all of my love life. There was a girl whom I actually 'picked up'. Seeing her in some shop, and liking her looks, I waylaid her and made her acquaintance, and invited her to go with me to an amusement park that was situated on a small island in the river. She consented, and met me that evening. She was just as pretty as I had thought, and the island as we approached on the ferry was a golden glow of lights. Snatches of music from the dancing pavilions were wafted to us on the faint intermittent breeze, together with the damp smell of trees. I wished I could dance, and resolved to go to a dancing-class and learn. Since I did not dance, we took in the

other amusements of the place, and imbibed ice-cream sodas. I felt not at ease. There didn't seem to be anything to talk about. I wasn't 'showing the girl a good time.' When I took her home, I thought she must be glad it was over. But she paused in front of the house and said, a little defiantly: "I go in the back way. This isn't my home, you know. I work here." I said that was all right, and felt miserable at not being able to give her any further reassurance. But why should she want to go out with me again? We just weren't good company for one another; I didn't dance and she didn't talk. I hoped I wasn't being snobbish; but when I thought of Margaret, who had been 'a factory girl,' I knew that wasn't it. We kissed one another good-night, and I felt ashamed of myself for having started something I couldn't go on with.

Then there was a picnic group that for a while I went on Sunday picnics with. I found myself regularly paired off with a tall, quiet, gentle, brown-haired girl; amidst a great deal of giggling, chatter and confusion, the girls in their Sunday clothes and the boys carrying enough food in baskets to feed a crew of threshers, we arrived by street car and walking at some wooded place, where we tried to do justice to the food, and sat around feeling stuffy the rest of the afternoon; at twilight the boys would lay their heads in the girls' laps, and there would be singing of sentimental popular songs; then, before it got too dark, we would go home. That was the routine picnic. But one Sunday somebody brought a new girl there, a beautiful, golden-haired blue-eyed girl. . . . And, our eyes having met, the rest of the picnic disappeared for me. I went to her, took her arm, and led her off dreamily into the woods. She went without question. We walked up the path, talking gaily, familiarly, like people who have known one another for a long time in dreams. We wandered in the woods until we came to a stream, and there we sat down on the bank and took off our shoes and stockings, and thrust our feet into the cool water. And there we stayed all afternoon, talking about heaven knows what, but very gaily and laughingly, utterly happy. I had forgotten time and place, and can only suppose that she had, too. Our eyes had hardly left each other's for a moment since our glances first magically met. I can only remember her blue eyes, her golden hair, her bare feet in the stream, and our happy laughter. But it grew twilight. We realized that we must have been gone a long time. We put on our shoes and stockings—*'Would to God your bare feet on the green grass trod and I beheld them as of yore'*—and walked back, silently and pensively, through the woods. Before we emerged upon the clearing, we stopped, and kissed shyly. Then we went to join the others. We were received in a curious way; everybody sat there and stared at us, and then everybody spoke at once, hailing us, and then there was a silence. I began to realize that we had not behaved in the way people should at a picnic. But then, I had just forgotten all about the picnic. Everybody jumped up, saying that it was time to go home. I found myself marching down the road between two of the other fellows, both of them very taciturn. I had the feeling that I was being treated like a criminal. Had it been so outrageous, to take

a girl away and keep her all afternoon? We got on the street-car; but there was not the usual singing. My companion of the afternoon, seeming very subdued, evidently in disgrace like myself, got off the car with several others, with only the most fleeting farewell glance at me. Presently I found myself taking the usual girl to her home. On the front porch she said, with a little choke, the conventional words, "Thank you for showing me—such a good time today." I realized for the first time that I had hurt her feelings. I hadn't meant to do that! I felt frightfully stupid, and grew red with shame. I stammered: "I—I'm sorry." She said it was all right; I doubted if it was, and thought I ought to say something more. But I decided I had better go; so I said good-bye, and hastily slunk away. It all reminded me of nothing so much as being waked up from a trance in the factory, when a poem was being created in my mind, to find the foreman standing over me asking why I hadn't done something or other. It was the crashing in of a meaningless chaos of reality upon a beautiful dream; nevertheless, the meaningless chaos of reality was the world in which I had to live.

I never saw the golden-haired blue-eyed girl again; and I don't remember going on any more picnics.

PERSONAL ESSAYS

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OLD CHINA

by Charles Lamb

I HAVE an almost feminine partiality for old china. When I go to see any great house, I enquire for the china-closet, and next for the picture gallery. I cannot defend the order of preference, but by saying, that we have all some taste or other, of too ancient a date to admit of our remembering distinctly that it was an acquired one. I can call to mind the first play, and the first exhibition, that I was taken to; but I am not conscious of a time when china jars and saucers were introduced into my imagination.

I had no repugnance then—why should I now have?—to those little, lawless, azure-tinctured grotesques, that under the notion of men and women, float about, uncircumscribed by any element, in that world before perspective—a china tea-cup.

I like to see my old friends—whom distance cannot diminish—figuring up in the air (so they appear to our optics), yet on *terra firma* still—for so we must in courtesy interpret that speck of deeper blue—which the decorous artist, to prevent absurdity, had made to spring up beneath their sandals.

I love the men with women's faces, and the women, if possible, with still more womanish expressions.

Here is a young and courtly Mandarin, handing tea to a lady from a salver—two miles off. See how distance seems to set off respect! And here the same lady, or another—for likeness is identity on tea-cups—is stepping into a little fairy boat, moored on the hither side of this calm garden river, with a dainty mincing foot, which in a right angle of incidence (as angles go in our world) must infallibly land her in the midst of a flowery mead—a furlong off on the other side of the same strange stream!

Farther on—if far or near can be predicated of their world—see horses, trees, pagodas, dancing the hays.

Here—a cow and rabbit couchant, and co-extensive—so objects show, seen through the lucid atmosphere of fine Cathay.

I was pointing out to my cousin last evening, over our Hyson (which we are old fashioned enough to drink unmixed still of an afternoon), some of these *speciosa miracula* upon a set of extraordinary old blue china (a recent purchase) which we were now for the first time using; and could not help remarking, how favourable circumstances had been to us of late years, that we could afford to please the eye sometimes with trifles of this sort—when a passing sentiment seemed to overshadow the brows of my companion. I am quick at detecting these summer clouds in Bridget.

"I wish the good old times would come again," she said, "when we were

not quite so rich. I do not mean, that I want to be poor; but there was a middle state"—so she was pleased to ramble on—"in which I am sure we were a great deal happier. A purchase is but a purchase, now that you have money enough and to spare. Formerly it used to be a triumph. When we coveted a cheap luxury (and, O! how much ado I had to get you to consent in those times!)—we were used to have a debate two or three days before, and to weigh the *for* and *against*, and think what we might spare it out of, and what saving we could hit upon, that should be an equivalent. A thing was worth buying then, when we felt the money that we paid for it.

"Do you remember the brown suit, which you made to hang upon you, till all your friends cried shame upon you, it grew so thread-bare—and all because of that folio Beaumont and Fletcher, which you dragged home late at night from Barker's in Covent Garden? Do you remember how we eyed it for weeks before we could make up our minds to the purchase, and had not come to a determination till it was near ten o'clock of the Saturday night, when you set off from Islington, fearing you should be too late—and when the old bookseller with some grumbling opened his shop, and by the twinkling taper (for he was setting bedwards) lighted out the relic from his dusty treasures—and when you lugged it home, wishing it were twice as cumbersome—and when you presented it to me—and when we were exploring the perfectness of it (*collating* you called it)—and while I was repairing some of the loose leaves with paste, which your impatience would not suffer to be left till daybreak—was there no pleasure in being a poor man? or can those neat black clothes which you wear now, and are so careful to keep brushed, since we have become rich and finical, give you half the honest vanity, with which you flaunted it about in that overworn suit—your old corbeau—for four or five weeks longer than you should have done, to pacify your conscience for the mighty sum of fifteen—or sixteen shillings was it?—a great affair we thought it then—which you had lavished on the old folio. Now you can afford to buy any book that pleases you, but I do not see that you ever bring me home any nice old purchases now.

"When you came home with twenty apologies for laying out a less number of shillings upon that print after Lionardo, which we christened the 'Lady Blanch'; when you looked at the purchase, and thought of the money—and thought of the money, and looked again at the picture—was there no pleasure in being a poor man? Now, you have nothing to do but to walk into Colnaghi's, and buy a wilderness of Lionardos. Yet do you?"

"Then, do you remember our pleasant walks to Enfield, and Potter's Bar, and Waltham, when we had a holyday—holydays, and all other fun, are gone, now we are rich—and the little handbasket in which I used to deposit our day's fare of savoury cold lamb and salad—and how you would pry about at noontide for some decent house, where we might go in, and produce our store—only paying for the ale that you must call for—and speculate upon the looks of the landlady, and whether she was likely to allow us a tablecloth—and wish for such another honest hostess, as Izaak Walton has described many

a one on the pleasant banks of the Lea, when he went a-fishing—and sometimes they would prove obliging enough, and sometimes they would look grudgingly upon us—but we had cheerful looks still for one another, and would eat our plain food savorily, scarcely grudging Piscator his Trout Hall? Now—when we go out a day's pleasuring, which is seldom moreover, we *ride* part of the way—and go into a fine inn, and order the best of dinners, never debating the expense—which, after all, never has half the relish of those chance country snaps, when we were at the mercy of uncertain usage, and a precarious welcome.

“You are too proud to see a play anywhere now but in the pit. Do you remember where it was we used to sit, when we saw the *Battle of Hexham*, and the *Surrender of Calais*, and *Bannister* and *Mrs. Bland* in the *Children in the Wood*—when we squeezed out our shillings a-piece to sit three or four times in a season in the one-shilling gallery—where you felt all the time that you ought not to have brought me—and more strongly I felt obligation to you for having brought me—and the pleasure was the better for a little shame—and when the curtain drew up, what cared we for our place in the house, or what mattered it where we were sitting, when our thoughts were with *Rosalind in Arden*, or with *Viola at the Court of Illyria*? You used to say, that the Gallery was the best place of all for enjoying a play socially—that the relish of such exhibitions must be in proportion to the infrequency of going—that the company we met there, not being in general readers of plays, were obliged to attend the more, and did attend, to what was going on, on the stage—because a word lost would have been a chasm, which it was impossible for them to fill up. With such reflections we consoled our pride then—and I appeal to you, whether, as a woman, I met generally with less attention and accommodation, than I have done since in more expensive situations in the house? The getting in indeed, and the crowding up those inconvenient staircases, was bad enough—but there was still a law of civility to woman recognised to quite as great an extent as we ever found in the other passages—and how a little difficulty overcome heightened the snug seat, and the play, afterwards! Now we can only pay our money and walk in. You cannot see, you say, in the galleries now. I am sure we saw, and heard too, well enough then—but sight, and all, I think, is gone with our poverty.

“There was pleasure in eating strawberries, before they became quite common—in the first dish of peas, while they were yet dear—to have them for a nice supper, a treat. What treat can you have now? If we were to treat ourselves now—that is, to have dainties a little above our means, it would be selfish and wicked. It is very little more that we allow ourselves beyond what the actual poor can get at, that makes what I call a treat—when two people living together, as we have done, now and then indulge themselves in a cheap luxury, which both like; while each apologises, and is willing to take both halves of the blame to his single share. I see no harm in people making much of themselves in that sense of the word. It may give them a hint how to make much of others. But now—what I mean by the word—we never do make

much of ourselves. None but the poor can do it. I do not mean the veriest poor of all, but persons as we were, just above poverty.

"I know what you were going to say, that it is mighty pleasant at the end of the year to make all meet—and much ado we used to have every Thirty-first Night of December to account for our exceedings—many a long face did you make over your puzzled accounts, and in contriving to make it out how we had spent so much—or that we had not spent so much—or that it was impossible we should spend so much next year—and still we found our slender capital decreasing—but then, betwixt ways, and projects, and compromises of one sort or another, and talk of curtailing this charge, and doing without that for the future—and the hope that youth brings, and laughing spirits (in which you were never poor till now) we pocketed up our loss, and in conclusion, with 'lusty brimmers' (as you used to quote it out of *hearty cheerful Mr. Cotton*, as you called him), we used to welcome in the 'coming guest.' Now we have no reckoning at all at the end of the old year—no flattering promises about the new year doing better for us."

Bridget is so sparing of her speech on most occasions, that when she gets into a rhetorical vein, I am careful how I interrupt it. I could not help, however, smiling at the phantom of wealth which her dear imagination had conjured up out of a clear income of a poor — hundred pounds a year. "It is true we were happier when we were poorer, but we were also younger, my cousin. I am afraid we must put up with the excess, for if we were to shake the superflux into the sea, we should not much mend ourselves. That we had much to struggle with, as we grew up together, we have reason to be most thankful. It strengthened, and knit our compact closer. We could never have been what we have been to each other, if we had always had the sufficiency which you now complain of. The resisting power—those natural dilations of the youthful spirit, which circumstances cannot straiten—with us are long since passed away. Competence to age is supplementary youth, a sorry supplement indeed, but I fear the best that is to be had. We must ride, where we formerly walked: live better, and lie softer—and shall be wise to do so—than we had means to do in those good old days you speak of. Yet could those days return—could you and I once more walk our thirty miles a-day—could Bannister and Mrs. Bland again be young, and you and I be young to see them—could the good old one-shilling gallery days return—they are dreams, my cousin, now—but could you and I at this moment, instead of this quiet argument, by our well-carpeted fire-side, sitting on this luxurious sofa—be once more struggling up those inconvenient staircases, pushed about, and squeezed, and elbowed by the poorest rabble of poor gallery scramblers—could I once more hear those anxious shrieks of yours—and the delicious *Thank God, we are safe*, which always followed when the topmost stair, conquered, let in the first light of the whole cheerful theatre down beneath us—I know not the fathom line that ever touched a descent so deep as I would be willing to bury more wealth in that Cræsus had, or the great Jew R—is supposed to have, to purchase it. And now do just look at that merry little Chinese

waiter holding an umbrella, big enough for a bed-tester, over the head of that pretty insipid half Madonna-ish chit of a lady in that very blue summer-house."

A MISSISSIPPI BUBBLE¹

by William M. Thackeray



THIS initial group of dusky children of the captivity is copied out of a little sketch-book which I carried in many a roundabout journey, and will point a moral or adorn a T as well as any other sketch in the volume. Yonder drawing was made in a country where there was such hospitality, friendship, kindness shown to the humble designer, that his eyes do not care to look out for faults, or his pen to note them. How they sang, how they laughed and grinned; how they scraped, bowed, and complimented you and each other,

those negroes of the cities of the southern parts of the then United States! My business kept me in the towns; I was but in one negro plantation-village, and there were only women and little children, the men being out a-field. But there was plenty of cheerfulness in the huts, under the great trees—I speak of what I saw—and amidst the dusky bondsmen of the cities. I witnessed a curious gaiety; heard amongst the black folk endless singing, shouting, and laughter; and saw on holidays black gentlemen and ladies arrayed in such splendour and comfort as freeborn workmen in our towns seldom exhibit. What a grin and bow that dark gentleman performed, who was the porter at the colonel's, when he said, 'You write you name, mas'r, else I will forget.' I am not going into the slavery question, I am not an advocate for 'the institution,' as I know, madam, by that angry toss of your head, you are about to declare me to be. For domestic purposes, my dear lady, it seemed to me about the dearest institution that can be devised. In a house in a Southern city you will find fifteen negroes doing the work which John, the cook, the housemaid, and the help, do perfectly in your own comfortable London house. And these fifteen negroes are the pick of a family of some eighty or ninety. Twenty are too sick or too old for work, let us say; twenty too clumsy; twenty are too young, and have to be nursed and watched by ten more. And master has to maintain the immense crew to do the work of half-a-dozen willing

¹ From W. M. Thackeray, *Roundabout Papers*.

hands. No, no; let Mitchel, the exile from poor dear enslaved Ireland, wish for a gang of 'fat niggers'; I would as soon you should make me a present of a score of Bengal elephants, when I need but a single stout horse to pull my brougham.

How hospitable they were, those Southern nien! In the North itself the welcome was not kinder, as I, who have eaten Northern and Southern salt, can testify! As for New Orleans, in spring-time—just when the orchards were flushing over with peach-blossoms, and the sweet herbs came to flavour the juleps—it seemed to me the city of the world where you can eat and drink the most and suffer the least. At Bordeaux itself, claret is not better to drink than at New Orleans. It was all good—believe an expert Robert—from the half-dollar Medoc of the public hotel table, to the private gentleman's choicest wine. Claret is, somehow, good in that gifted place at dinner, at supper, and at breakfast in the morning. It is good: it is superabundant:—and there is nothing to pay. Find me speaking ill of such a country! When I do, *pone me pigris campis*: smother me in a desert, or let Mississippi or Garonne drown me! At that comfortable tavern on Pontchartrain we had a *boullabaisse* than which a better was never eaten at Marseilles; and not the least headache in the morning, I give you my word; on the contrary, you only wake with a sweet refreshing thirst for claret and water. They say there is fever there in the autumn: but not in the spring-time, when the peach-blossoms blush over the orchards, and the sweet herbs come to flavour the juleps.

I was bound from New Orleans to Saint Louis; and our walk was constantly on the Levee, whence we could see a hundred of those huge white Mississippi steamers at their moorings in the river: 'Look,' said my friend Lochlomond to me, as we stood one day on the quay—'look at that' post! Look at that coffee-house behind it! Sir, last year a steamer blew up in the river yonder, just where you see those men pulling off in the boat. By that post where you are standing a mule was cut in two by a fragment of the burst machinery, and a bit of the chimney stove in that first-floor window of the coffee-house killed a negro who was cleaning knives in the top room!' I looked at the post, at the coffee-house window, at the steamer in which I was going to embark, at my friend, with a pleasing interest not divested of melancholy. Yesterday, it was the donkey, thinks I, who was cut in two: it may be *cras mihi*. Why, in the same little sketch-book, there is a drawing of an Alabama river steamer which blew up on the very next voyage after that on which your humble servant was on board! Had I but waited another week, I might have . . . These incidents give a queer zest to the voyage down the life stream in America. When our huge, tall, white, pasteboard castle of a steamer began to work up stream, every limb in her creaked, and groaned, and quivered, so that you might fancy she would burst right off. Would she hold together, or would she split into ten million of shivers? O my home and children! Would your humble servant's body be cut in two across yonder chain on the Levee, or be precipitated into yonder first-floor, so as to damage the chest of a black man cleaning boots at the window? The black man is

safe for me, thank goodness. But you see the little accident *might* have happened. It has happened; and if to a mule, why not to a much more docile animal? On our journey up the Mississippi, I give you my honour we were on fire three times, and burned our cookroom down. The deck at night was a great firework—the chimney spouted myriads of stars, which fell blackening on our garments, sparkling on to the deck, or gleaming into the mighty stream through which we laboured—the mighty yellow stream with all its snags.

How I kept up my courage through these dangers shall now be narrated. The excellent landlord of the Saint Charles Hotel, when I was going away, begged me to accept two bottles of the very finest Cognac, with his compliments; and I found them in my state-room with my luggage. Lochlomond came to see me off, and as he squeezed my hand at parting, 'Roundabout,' says he, 'the wine mayn't be very good on board, so I have brought a dozen-case of the Medoc which you liked'; and we grasped together the hands of friendship and farewell. Whose boat is this pulling up to the ship? It is our friend Glenlivat, who gave us the dinner on Lake Pontchartrain. 'Roundabout,' says he, 'we have tried to do what we could for you, my boy; and it has been done *de bon cœur*' (I detect a kind tremulousness in the good fellow's voice as he speaks). 'I say,—hem!—the a—the wine isn't too good on board, so I've brought you a dozen of Medoc for your voyage, you know. And God bless you; and when I come to London in May I shall come and see you. Hallo! here's Johnson come to see you off, too!'

As I am a miserable sinner, when Johnson grasped my hand, he said, 'Mr. Roundabout, you can't be sure of the wine on board these steamers, so I thought I would bring you a little case of that light claret which you liked at my house.' *Et de trois!* No wonder I could face the Mississippi with so much courage supplied to me! Where are you, honest friends, who gave me of your kindness and your cheer? May I be considerably boiled, blown up, and snagged, if I speak hard words of you! May claret turn sour ere I do!

Mounting the stream it chanced that we had very few passengers. How far is the famous city of Memphis from New Orleans? I do not mean the Egyptian Memphis, but the American Memphis, from which to the American Cairo we slowly toiled up the river—to the American Cairo at the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. And at Cairo we parted company from the boat, and from some famous and gifted fellow-passengers who joined us at Memphis, and whose pictures we had seen in many cities of the South. I do not give the names of these remarkable people, unless, by some wondrous chance, in inventing a name I should light upon that real one which some of them bore; but if you please I will say that our fellow-passengers whom we took in at Memphis were no less personages than the Vermont Giant and the famous Bearded Lady of Kentucky and her son. Their pictures I had seen in many cities through which I travelled with my own little performance. I think the Vermont Giant was a trifle taller in his pictures than he was in life (being represented in the former as, at least, some two stories high): but the

lady's prodigious beard received no more than justice at the hands of the painter; that portion of it which I saw being really most black, rich, and curly—I say the portion of beard, for this modest or prudent woman kept I don't know how much of the beard covered up with a red handkerchief, from which I suppose it only emerged when she went to bed, or when she exhibited it professionally.

The Giant, I must think, was an overrated giant. I have known gentlemen, not in the profession, better made, and I should say taller, than the Vermont gentleman. A strange feeling I used to have at meals; when, on looking round our little society, I saw the Giant, the Bearded Lady of Kentucky, the little Bearded Boy of three years old, the Captain (this I think; but at this distance of time I would not like to make the statement on affidavit), and the three other passengers, all with their knives in their mouths, making play at the dinner—a strange feeling I say it was, and as though I was in a castle of ogres. But, after all, why so squeamish? A few scores of years back, the finest gentlemen and ladies of Europe did the like. Belinda ate with her knife; and Saccharissa had only that weapon, or a two-pronged fork, or a spoon, for her pease. Have you ever looked at Gilray's print of the Prince of Wales, a languid voluptuary, retiring after his meal, and noted the toothpick which he uses? . . . You are right, madam, I own that the subject is revolting and terrible. I will not pursue it. Only—allow that a gentleman, in a shaky steamboat, on a dangerous river, in a far-off country, which caught fire three times during the voyage—(of course I mean the steamboat, not the country), seeing a giant, a voracious supercargo, a bearded lady, and a little boy, not three years of age, with a chin already quite black and curly, all plying their victuals down their throats with their knives—allow, madam, that in such a company a man had a right to feel a little nervous. I don't know whether you have ever remarked the Indian jugglers swallowing their knives, or seen, as I have, a whole table of people performing the same trick, but if you look at their eyes when they do it, I assure you there is a roll in them which is dreadful.

Apart from this usage which they practise in common with many thousand most estimable citizens, the Vermont gentleman, and the Kentucky whiskered lady—or did I say the reverse?—whichever you like, my dear sir—were quite quiet, modest, unassuming people. She sat working with her needle, if I remember right. He, I suppose, slept in the great cabin, which was seventy feet long at the least, nor, I am bound to say, did I hear in the night any snores or roars, such as you would fancy ought to accompany the sleep of ogres. Nay, this giant had quite a small appetite (unless, to be sure, he went forward and ate a sheep or two in private with his horrid knife—oh, the dreadful thought! but *in public*, I say, he had quite a delicate appetite), and was also a tea-totaller. I don't remember to have heard the lady's voice, though I might, not unnaturally, have been curious to hear it. Was her voice a deep, rich, magnificent bass; or was it soft, fluty, and mild? I shall never

know now. Even if she comes to this country, I shall never go and see her. I *have* seen her, and for nothing.

You would have fancied that, as after all we were only some half-dozen on board, she might have dispensed with her red handkerchief, and talked, and eaten her dinner in comfort: but in covering her chin there was a kind of modesty. That beard was her profession: that beard brought the public to see her: out of her business she wished to put that beard aside as it were: as a barrister would wish to put off his wig. I know some who carry theirs into private life, and who mistake you and me for jury-boxes when they address us: but these are not your modest barristers, not your true gentlemen.

Well, I own I respected the lady for the modesty with which, her public business over, she retired into private life. She respected her life, and her beard. That beard having done its day's work, she puts it away in a handkerchief; and becomes, as far as in her lies, a private ordinary person. All public men and women of good sense, I should think, have this modesty. When, for instance, in my small way, poor Mrs. Brown comes simpering up to me, with her album in one hand, a pen in the other, and says, 'Ho, ho, dear Mr. Roundabout, write us one of your amusing, etc. etc.,' my beard drops behind my handkerchief instantly. Why am I to wag my chin and grin for Mrs. Brown's good pleasure? My dear madam, I have been making faces all day. It is my profession. I do my comic business with the greatest pains, seriousness, and trouble: and with it make, I hope, a not dishonest livelihood. If you ask Mon^s. Blondin to tea, you don't have a rope stretched from your garret window to the opposite side of the square, and request Monsieur to take his tea out on the centre of the rope? I lay my hand on this waistcoat, and declare that not once in the course of our voyage together did I allow the Kentucky Giant to suppose I was speculating on his stature, or the Bearded Lady to surmise that I wished to peep under the handkerchief which muffled the lower part of her face.

And the more fool you, says some cynic. (Faugh, those cynics, I hate 'em!) Don't you know, sir, that a man of genius is pleased to have his genius recognised; that a beauty likes to be admired; that an actor likes to be applauded; that stout old Wellington himself was pleased, and smiled when the people cheered him as he passed? Suppose you had paid some respectful elegant compliment to that lady? Suppose you had asked that giant, if, for once, he would take anything at the liquor-bar? you might have learned a great deal of curious knowledge regarding giants and bearded ladies, about whom you evidently now know very little. There was that little boy of three years old, with a fine beard already, and his little legs and arms, as seen out of his little frock, covered with a dark down. What a queer little capering satyr! He was quite good-natured, childish, rather solemn. He had a little Norval dress, I remember: the drollest little Norval.

I have said the B.L. had another child. Now this was a little girl of some six years old, as fair and as smooth of skin, dear madam, as your own darling cherubs. She wandered about the great cabin quite melancholy. No one

seemed to care for her. All the family affections were centred on Master Esau yonder. His little beard was beginning to be a little fortune already, whereas Miss Rosalba's was of no good to the family. No one would pay a cent to see *her* little fair face. No wonder the poor little maid was melancholy. As I looked at her, I seemed to walk more and more in a fairy tale, and more and more in a cavern of ogres. Was this a little foundling whom they had picked up in some forest, where lie the picked bones of the queen, her tender mother, and the tough old defunct monarch, her father? No. Doubtless, they were quite good-natured people, these. I don't believe they were unkind to the little girl without the mustachios. It may have been only my fancy that she repined because she had a cheek no more bearded than a rose's.

Would you wish your own daughter, madam, to have a smooth cheek, a modest air, and a gentle feminine behaviour, or to be—I won't say a whiskered prodigy, like this Bearded Lady of Kentucky—but a masculine wonder, a virago, a female personage of more than female strength, courage, wisdom? Some authors, who shall be nameless, are, I know, accused of depicting the most feeble, brainless, namby-pamby heroines, for ever whimpering tears and prattling commonplaces. *You* would have the heroine of your novel so beautiful that she should charm the captain (or hero, whoever he may be) with her appearance; surprise and confound the bishop with her learning; outride the squire, and get the brush, and, when he fell from his horse, whip out a lancet and bleed him; rescue from fever and death the poor cottager's family whom the doctor had given up; make 21 at the butts with the rifle, when the poor captain only scored 18; give him twenty in fifty at billiards and beat him; and draw tears from the professional Italian people by her exquisite performance (of voice and violoncello) in the evening;—I say, if a novelist would be popular with ladies—the great novel-readers of the world—this is the sort of heroine who would carry him through half-a-dozen editions. Suppose I had asked that Bearded Lady to sing? Confess, now, miss, you would not have been displeased if I had told you that she had a voice like Lablache, only ever so much lower.

My dear, you would like to be a heroine? You would like to travel in triumphal caravans; to see your effigy placarded on city walls; to have your levées attended by admiring crowds, all crying out, 'Was there ever such a wonder of a woman?' You would like admiration? Consider the tax you pay for it. You would be alone were you eminent. Were you so distinguished from your neighbours—I will not say by a beard and whiskers that were odious—but by a great and remarkable intellectual superiority—would you, do you think, be any the happier? Consider envy. Consider solitude. Consider the jealousy and torture of mind which this Kentucky lady must feel, suppose she is to hear that there is, let us say, a Missouri prodigy, with a beard larger than hers? Consider how she is separated from her kind by the possession of that wonder of a beard. When that beard grows gray, how lonely she will be, the poor old thing! If it falls off, the public admiration falls off too; and

how she will miss it—the compliments of the trumpeters, the admiration of the crowd, the gilded progress of the car. I see an old woman alone in a decrepit old caravan, with cobwebs on the knocker, with a blistered ensign flapping idly over the door. Would you like to be that deserted person? Ah, Chloe! To be good, to be simple, to be modest, to be loved, be thy lot. Be thankful thou art not taller, nor stronger, nor richer, nor wiser than the rest of the world!

HOW SHALL I WORD IT?¹

by Max Beerbohm

Ir would seem that I am one of those travellers for whom the railway bookstall does not cater. Whenever I start on a journey, I find that my choice lies between well-printed books which I have no wish to read, and well-written books which I could not read without permanent injury to my eyesight. The keeper of the bookstall, seeing me gaze vaguely along his shelves, suggests that I should take 'Fen Country Fanny' or else 'The Track of Blood' and have done with it. Not wishing to hurt his feelings, I refuse these works on the plea that I have read them. Whereon he, divining despite me that I am a superior person, says 'Here is a nice little handy edition of More's "Utopia"' or 'Carlyle's "French Revolution"' and again I make some excuse. What pleasure could I get from trying to cope with a masterpiece printed in diminutive grey-ish type on a semi-transparent little grey-ish page? I relieve the bookstall of nothing but a newspaper or two.

The other day, however, my eye and fancy were caught by a book entitled 'How Shall I Word It?' and sub-entitled 'A Complete Letter Writer for Men and Women.' I had never read one of these manuals, but had often heard that there was a great and constant 'demand' for them. So I demanded this one. It is no great fun in itself. The writer is no fool. He has evidently a natural talent for writing letters. His style is, for the most part, discreet and easy. If you were a young man writing 'to Father of Girl he wishes to Marry' or 'thanking Fiancee for Present' or 'reproaching Fiancee for being a Flirt,' or if you were a mother 'asking Governess her Qualifications' or 'replying to Undesirable Invitation for her Child,' or indeed if you were in any other one of the crises which this book is designed to alleviate, you might copy out and post the specially-provided letter without making yourself ridiculous in the eyes of its receiver—unless, of course, he or she also possessed a copy of the book. But—well, can you conceive any one copying out and posting one of these letters, or even taking it as the basis for composition? You cannot. That shows how little you know of your fellow-creatures. Not you nor I

¹ From Max Beerbohm, *And Even Now*, published and copyrighted by E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., New York.

can plumb the abyss at the bottom of which such humility is possible. Nevertheless, as we know by that great and constant 'demand,' there the abyss is, and there multitudes are at the bottom of it. Let's peer down . . . No, all is darkness. But faintly, if we listen hard, is borne up to us a sound of the scratching of innumerable pens—pens whose wielders are all trying, as the author of this handbook urges them, to 'be original, fresh, and interesting' by dint of more or less strict adherence to sample.

Giddily you draw back from the edge of the abyss. Come!—here is a thought to steady you. The mysterious great masses of helpless folk for whom 'How Shall I Word It' is written are sound at heart, delicate in feeling, anxious to please, most loth to wound. For it must be presumed that the author's style of letter-writing is informed as much by a desire to give his public what it needs, and will pay for, as by his own beautiful nature; and in the course of all the letters that he dictates you will find not one harsh word, not one ignoble thought or unkind insinuation. In all of them, though so many are for the use of persons placed in the most trying circumstances, and some of them are for persons writhing under a sense of intolerable injury, sweetness and light do ever reign. Even 'yours truly, Jacob Langton,' in his 'letter to his Daughter's Mercenary Fiancé,' mitigates the sternness of his tone by the remark that his 'task is inexpressibly painful.' And he, Mr. Langton, is the one writer who lets the post go out on his wrath. When Horace Masterton, of Thorpe Road, Putney, receives from Miss Jessica Weir, of Fir Villa, Blackheath, a letter 'declaring her Change of Feelings,' does he upbraid her? No; 'it was honest and brave of you to write to me so straightforwardly and at the back of my mind I know you have done what is best . . . I give you back your freedom only at your desire. God bless you, dear.' Not less admirable is the behaviour, in similar case, of Cecil Grant (14, Glover Street, Streatham). Suddenly, as a bolt from the blue, comes a letter from Miss Louie Hawke (Elm View, Deerhurst), breaking off her betrothal to him. Haggard, he sits down to his desk; his pen traverses the note-paper—calling down curses on Louie and on all her sex? No; 'one cannot say good-bye for ever without deep regret to days that have been so full of happiness. I must thank you sincerely for all your great kindness to me . . . With every sincere wish for your future happiness,' he bestows complete freedom on Miss Hawke. And do not imagine that in the matter of self-control and sympathy, of power to understand all and pardon all, the men are lagged behind by the women. Miss Leila Johnson (The Manse, Carlyle) has observed in Leonard Wace (Dover Street, Saltburn) a certain coldness of demeanour; yet 'I do not blame you; it is probably your nature'; and Leila in her sweet forbearance is typical of all the other pained women in these pages: she is but one of a crowd of heroines.

Face to face with all this perfection, the not perfect reader begins to crave some little outburst of wrath, of hatred or malice, from one of these imaginary ladies and gentlemen. He longs for—how shall he word it?—a glimpse of

some bad motive, of some little lapse from dignity. Often, passing by a pillar-box, I have wished I could unlock it and carry away its contents, to be studied at my leisure. I have always thought such a haul would abound in things fascinating to a student of human nature. One night, not long ago, I took a waxen impression of the lock of the pillar-box nearest to my house, and had a key made. This implement I have as yet lacked either the courage or the opportunity to use. And now I think I shall throw it away . . . No, I shan't. I refuse, after all, to draw my inference that the bulk of the British public writes always in the manner of this handbook. Even if they all have beautiful natures they must sometimes be sent slightly astray by inferior impulses, just as are you and I.

And, if err they must, surely it were well they should know how to do it correctly and forcibly. I suggest to our author that he should sprinkle his next edition with a few less righteous examples, thereby both purging his book of its monotony and somewhat justifying its sub-title. Like most people who are in the habit of writing things to be printed, I have not the knack of writing really good letters. But let me crudely indicate the sort of thing that our manual needs. . . .

LETTER FROM POOR MAN TO OBTAIN MONEY FROM RICH ONE

(The English law is particularly hard on what is called blackmail. It is therefore essential that the applicant should write nothing that might afterwards be twisted to incriminate him.—Ed.)

Dear Sir,

To-day, as I was turning out a drawer in my attic, I came across a letter which by a curious chance fell into my hands some years ago, and which, in the stress of grave pecuniary embarrassment, had escaped my memory. It is a letter written by yourself to a lady, and the date shows it to have been written shortly after your marriage. It is of a confidential nature, and might, I fear, if it fell into the wrong hands, be cruelly misconstrued. I would wish you to have the satisfaction of destroying it in person. At first I thought of sending it on to you by post. But I know how happy you are in your domestic life; and probably your wife and you, in your perfect mutual trust, are in the habit of opening each other's letters. Therefore, to avoid risk, I would prefer to hand the document to you personally. I will not ask you to come to my attic, where I could not offer you such hospitality as is due to a man of your wealth and position. You will be so good as to meet me at 3.0 A.M. (sharp), to-morrow (Thursday) beside the tenth lamp-post to the left on the Surrey side of Waterloo Bridge; at which hour and place we shall not be disturbed.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours respectfully

James Gridge.

LETTER FROM YOUNG MAN REFUSING TO PAY HIS TAILOR'S BILL

Mr. Eustace Davenant has received the half-servile, half-insolent screech which Mr. Yardley has addressed to him. Let Mr. Yardley cease from crawling on his knees and shaking his fist. Neither this posture nor this gesture can wring one bent farthing from the pockets of Mr. Davenant, who was a minor at the time when that series of ill-made suits was supplied to him and will hereafter, as in the past, shout (without prejudice) from the house-tops that of all the tailors in London Mr. Yardley is at once the most grasping and the least competent.

LETTER TO THANK AUTHOR FOR INSCRIBED COPY OF BOOK

Dear Mr. Emanuel Flower,

It was kind of you to think of sending me a copy of your new book. It would have been kinder still to think again and abandon that project. I am a man of gentle instincts, and do not like to tell you that 'A Flight into Arcady' (of which I have skimmed a few pages, thus wasting two or three minutes of my not altogether worthless time) is trash. On the other hand, I am determined that you shall not be able to go around boasting to your friends, if you have any, that this work was not condemned, derided, and dismissed by your sincere well-wisher, *Wrexford Cripps*.

LETTER TO MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT UNSEATED AT GENERAL ELECTION

Dear Mr. Pobsby-Burford,

Though I am myself an ardent Tory, I cannot but rejoice in the crushing defeat you have just suffered in West Odgetown. There are moments when political conviction is overborne by personal sentiment; and this is one of them. Your loss of the seat that you held is the more striking by reason of the splendid manner in which the northern and eastern divisions of Odgetown have been wrested from the Liberal Party. The great bulk of the newspaper-reading public will be puzzled by your extinction in the midst of our party's triumph. But then, the great mass of the newspaper-reading public has not met you. I have. You will probably not remember me. You are the sort of man who would not remember anybody who might not be of some definite use to him. Such, at least, was one of the impressions you made on me when I met you last summer at a dinner given by our friends the Pelhams. Among the other things in you that struck me were the blatant pomposity of your manner, your appalling flow of cheap platitudes, and your hoggish lack of ideas. It is such men as you that lower the tone of public life. And I am sure that in writing to you thus I am but expressing what is felt, without distinction of party, by all who sat with you in the late Parliament.

The one person in whose behalf I regret your withdrawal into private life is your wife, whom I had the pleasure of taking in to the aforesaid dinner. It was evident to me that she was a woman whose spirit was well-nigh broken by her conjunction with you. Such remnants of cheerfulness as were in her I attributed to the Parliamentary duties which kept you out of her sight for so very many hours daily. I do not like to think of the fate to which the free and independent electors of West Odgetown have just condemned her. Only, remember this: chattel of yours though she is, and timid and humble, she despises you in her heart.

I am, dear Mr. Pobsby-Burford,

Yours very truly,

Harold Thistlake.

LETTER FROM YOUNG LADY IN ANSWER TO INVITATION FROM OLD
SCHOOLMISTRESS

My dear Miss Price,

How awfully sweet of you to ask me to stay with you for a few days but how *can* you think I may have forgotten you for of course I think of you so very often and of the three years I spent at your school because it is such a joy not to be there any longer and if one is at all down it bucks one up derectly to remember that *thats* all over atanyrate and that one has enough food to nurrish one and not that awful monottany of life and not the petty fogging daily tirrany you went in for and I can imagin no greater thrill and luxury in a way than to come and see the whole dismal grind still going on but without me being in it but this would be rather beastly of me wouldnt it so please dear Miss Price dont expect me and do excuse mistakes of English Composition and Spelling and etcetra in your affectionate old pupil,

Emily Therese Lynn-Royston.

ps, I often rite to people telling them where I was eddicated and highly reckomending you.

LETTER IN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF WEDDING PRESENT

Dear Lady Amblesham,

Who gives quickly, says the old proverb, gives twice. For this reason I have purposely delayed writing to you, lest I should appear to thank you more than once for the small, cheap, hideous present you sent me on the occasion of my recent wedding. Were you a poor woman, that little bowl of ill-imitated Dresden china would convict you of tastelessness merely; were you a blind woman, of nothing but an odious parsimony. As you have normal eyesight and more than normal wealth, your gift to me proclaims you at once a Philistine and a miser (or rather did so proclaim you until, less than ten seconds after I had unpacked it from its wrappings of tissue paper, I took it to the open window and had the satisfaction of seeing it shattered to

atoms on the pavement). But stay! I perceive a possible flaw in my argument. Perhaps you were guided in your choice by a definite wish to insult me. I am sure, on reflection, that this was so. I *shall not forget*.

Yours, etc.,

Cynthia Beaumarsh.

PS. My husband asked me to tell you to warn Lord Amblesham to keep out of his way or to assume some disguise so complete that he will not be recognized by him and horsewhipped.

PPS. I am sending copies of this letter to the principal London and provincial newspapers.

LETTER FROM

But enough! I never thought I should be so strong in this line. I had not foreseen such copiousness and fatal fluency. Never again will I tap these deep dark reservoirs in a character that had always seemed to me, on the whole, so amiable.

THE DEAN'S CROQUET¹

by Robert P. Tristram Coffin

I HAD two minds, anyway, about accepting the Dean's invitation to play croquet with him on that Sunday afternoon in October. Yet, after all, like Alice on a similar occasion, I felt that invitations from high places were not to be lightly refused. Still I was not sure of my Dean. He lived too near me in the Garden Quad; just above me, in fact. I had already discovered that he did not care at all for the guitar. Nor did he admire rich young voices lifting on high the songs of two hemispheres. He had come downstairs expressly to tell me so on rather too recent a midnight; that is, he had *started* down to do that. But the youth of bygone College generations willed it otherwise; and in the hollows their feet had worn in the winding stairway he had stumbled in the dark and fallen. He fell all the rest of the way to my oak, striking his head on it where it stood ajar. He must have been most woefully stunned, for after a decent interval, with bated breath, we heard his feet ascending again. And I knew that here was a man who could be trusted to be disconcertingly direct, on chapel absences and other things, even over his port, which was the mellowest in Oxford. I knew him for a man, too, properly respected throughout the University. He held all records for speed in getting through the chapel services Sunday evenings. One had no sooner turned eastward to face the altar and begin a muttered Apostles' Creed, than he was through it and back the other way, galloping at his

¹ From R. P. T. Coffin, *A Book of Crowns and Cottages*. By permission of the Yale University Press.

magnificent pace to a triumphant and breathless close. He was so swift that half his congregation were always up and the other half down. The chapel stalls had all the appearance of a collection of jacks-in-the-box. He was splendid.

But it was a deeper reason than all these that made me hesitate to accept the invitation to croquet. From my boyhood I remembered dim pictures of bitter endings to croquet games. It is one of the few philosophical observations that I have made in my life that more friendships have been lost at croquet than in battle. I made it to my wife, later on when I had got one; and when she doubted me, then and there in the midst of our honeymoon I took her to the veranda overlooking our hostelry's croquet lawn and let her see for herself. It was not five minutes before a retired colonel with silvered hair fell into so violent a dispute with his friend the retired surgeon that the afternoon's play broke up in confusion. Innocent little balls of wood, innocent mallets, a greensward right out of the Twenty-third Psalm; and yet the combination is as deadly as guncotton. Cotton, harmless stuff of everyday use, a mere dab of nitric acid—of such stuff are earthquakes made. It is the pacific surface of the game that permits terrific seethings of the soul to go on insidiously unnoticed and unchecked. I know whereof I speak, for I have scars on my knuckles today, reminders of my own boyhood volcanoes that went too long unmarked under the sweet pastoral of a croquet game. There is a reason for the Queen's taste for capital punishment; she was a devotee of croquet, and as such a headsman became her better than her crown. It is a game that ought to be forbidden by law.

The combination of this game with my particular Dean was bound to be terrible. So I had other thoughts than those for the mellow tints in Bagley Wood when I climbed Boar's Hill that sunny afternoon. Nor did the Dean's house reassure me. If it had been castellated and battlemented like some of the nightmares of North Oxford, I should not have minded. But it was all too sweet and lovely in its low, cottage attractiveness; it even had hearts cut out of its pea-green blinds. It is in such houses that murders are done.

The Dean came out to meet me all smiles. That, too, boded no good. He showed me flower beds that I felt sure in his heart he did not love. The lawn was especially smooth and soft. I expected the worst. But then came the astounding break in the chain of coincidences. The Dean's lady approached. . . . Really, I could think only of Alice as the sharp-chinned Duchess sailed up to meet her. The Dean's lady was as homely as kind and open-hearted people always are; she was so homely that she was absolutely reassuring. She was regal. I knew at once I should enjoy croquet for the first time in my life. We made friends at once, in spite of the sinister presence of her husband, who was introducing me to his daughter most graciously—I *think* it was his daughter; but one can never quite catch anything that English people say when they make introductions. They always sink their voices and purr. There was an infant, too, somewhere between the tea things and the croquet mallets; and I believe it was the son of the house. Anyway,

it looked like the Dean's lady. I liked it. I stopped ever so often to poke it playfully with a finger as it lay—too flat I thought at the time—in its pram.

There were perhaps a dozen other people, spectators, I suppose, of the principal match, which was designed as my discomfiture. Tea was most desultory, as only English Sunday teas outdoors can be; here a sandwich, there a well-played shot, croquet balls and butter scones mingled, and everybody talking at once and in all keys. It is a great comfort, though, to the poor conversationalist, for one never needs to finish a sentence; simply a phrase or two will do. Sentences and mallets poised in middle air.

Somehow, at last, we got started on the game that was to be my Actium. Somehow the rest disentangled themselves from wickets and tea tables and formed a sort of gallery. Nothing disconcerts me quite so much as a gallery. There was an electric feeling in the air that here was *the* match. A war of two worlds, they thought; English natural ability versus painstaking American technique. I knew what they were thinking behind their glowing British faces. Then we chose partners, or rather the Dean chose. He gave me his wife, who was the worst player I believe I have ever met; and he took his own daughter, or at any rate I shall call her so, who was one of the best. The wickets were straightened, colors chosen; and the game was on.

Now, as a boy, I flatter myself that my playing was quite the best in our neighborhood. I could beat all my cousins with one-handed shots. I was a manifest champion. What I might not have done, had I kept up my game till now, there is no telling. But here I was ten years away from my game and three thousand miles off my green. And I say this with an unclouded conscience: had I been the champion of my country and the Dean a mere British novice in the knee breeches of a ten-year-old lad, and had I been paired with the Dean's lady, I would have gone down to ignominy that day. She was exquisite in her inability to make the ball go in any required direction. She could miss a wicket that a blind man could have failed to make without trying. She was so bad that she was really superb. Quite the loudest of the afternoon's applause followed her shots. It was wonderful to see her slice the ball around the closest of wickets. A billiards expert would have given much to have the reverse english she put into her strokes. Not that I cared. I had nothing but relief. I admired her for it. If it had not been for my partner, I think the game might have ended like so many of the games of my youth; and I or the Dean, or both of us, might have worn bandages. The Dean's lady saved the day.

Early in the game the Dean showed me the black designs he had had in his heart in inviting me hither. He painstakingly drove my ball into the culvert at the bottom of the garden where for the most part, save for one or two very brief intervals, I remained for the afternoon. Among the weeds down there I made my first acquaintance with nettles. It was pure and premeditated malice on the Dean's part. Whenever I emerged by some marvel of lofting skill, it was only to be sent back. Whatever defects my strokes might have had, they were mercifully hidden from the gallery by ten feet of green

England. The Dean had other plans for his wife. He purposely kept her upon the grounds to amuse the spectators. He used her as a target for an extra shot whenever he imagined he needed one. He never did need one, as it turned out; but he kept her there just the same. I did not have even the constant relief of seeing her miss her strokes near by me. But in his too great eagerness to overwhelm me utterly the Dean defeated his own ends, which, I am firmly convinced now, were nothing short of manslaughter. I could not get into a white heat, when my heart was brimmed with laughter. Now had he given me his daughter, who was a good player, as I judged from the genuine applause that came from the unseen gallery from time to time when it was her turn, I shudder to think how the affair might have ended. It was a stroke of fortune for one of us that day, I am not sure which, this misjudgment of the Dean.

The game was over at last. I could return to the upper air. Tea was continued. The last of the cakes were disposed of. We all said goodbye and what a splendid afternoon's sport it had been. The Dean in seeing me off fairly beamed. He said he did not remember when he had so thoroughly enjoyed a croquet match before. He radiated. But I knew better. And I shall always know that to his dying day he will regret a slip of his which kept his trim lawn from becoming a shambles.

ON PLAYING THE TRIANGLE¹

by Alexander Brent-Smith

MODEST people who freely admit their inability to master the violin, the flute, and other instruments of skill are invariably ready to offer their services when it comes to a question of playing the triangle. Certainly it is an instrument which in itself is not technically difficult to play. It has no awkward positions as stringed instruments have; it requires no nimbleness of finger as does the flute, nor does it require a careful control of breath and a firm upper lip as do the oboe, the horn, and the trumpet. And much more than that, it has one great advantage from the point of view of the unmusical (an advantage shared only by the big drum and cymbals), that owing to some peculiar acoustical properties hidden in its triangular frame it cannot be out of tune.

Nor is any knowledge of the construction of the instrument necessary to a player's salvation. All violinists know, or should know, that their instrument has a scroll, a finger-board, and a sound-peg (or do I mean a vent-peg?). Flute players know whether they are playing on a silver or a wooden flute. Clarinet players frequently know whether they are playing upon an A or a B

¹From the *Musical Times*. By permission of the author.

flat clarinet, but triangle players are notoriously ignorant of the make and peculiarities of their instrument. I suppose that scarcely one in ten triangle-players is aware that the interior angles of a triangle are together equal to two right-angles. And whereas any violinist knows whether his instrument is a Stradivarius or an Amati, few triangularists care a rap whether their instruments are valuable old equilaterals or merely imitation isosceles of some modern period.

The triangle has another advantage in the eyes of the superficially-minded. It is not a solo instrument. The performer on the triangle as he sits at dinner does not lose his appetite at the thought that later in the evening his hostess will glide up to him and say, "Oh, Mr. Euclid, I hope you have brought your triangle," or, "Perhaps, Mr. Archimedes, you could favour us with a trifle on your exquisite equilateral." From such penalties of greatness he at any rate is free.

Furthermore, the triangle-player is free from the anxiety that he may not do the music full justice. The triangle cannot sound dissonant, a fact which makes the instrument of so little use to many composers. Nor can it deal satisfactorily with melodies, though I am told that there is extant an arrangement of the "Ride of the Valkyries" for triangle and drum. Since, then, the player cannot be out of tune and cannot spoil the melody, he is free from those familiar tags of criticism: "Technically, Mr. Archimedes is above reproach, but he failed to do full justice to the deep emotional content of Stravagansky's lovely triangle-concerto; nor was his intonation always above reproach."

All, then, that the would-be virtuoso upon the triangle requires is a steady left hand for holding the depending string, and a quick wrist for executing rapid machine-gun fire in one of the bottom corners. So far it would seem that the path to fame is roses, roses all the way, but alas, among the roses are some treacherous thorns. These thorns I will now discover, no doubt to the chagrin of the ambitious young triangle-player.

The first thorn, a peculiarly jagged and hurtful fellow, is the fact that by no possible means can the tone of the instrument be concealed. If you are a violinist and you lose your place you can attempt an entry without causing comment. But not even with the most delicate touch can you risk a trial entry upon the triangle, because the gentlest ping will carry through the tone of the full orchestra, bringing a baleful glare into the eye of the conductor and a roseate hue upon the cheek of the once happy triangularist.

To make a correct entry after a wait of, say, two hundred bars is difficult for any instrumentalist, but doubly so for the unhappy triangle-player, who, when he does come in, cannot be sure that he is right owing to the woeful monotony of pitch. This sameness of pitch furthermore renders even the following of the part an extremely hazardous business. In the music given to most other instruments there is, as a rule, some rise and fall in the pitch by which the player can determine whether he is right or wrong, but not so in the triangle part. There every ping is exactly like every other ping, until the

harassed player longs for an alternative pong—or even a pang—to vary the monotony, and to give him some clue to his whereabouts.

But the troubles connected with this most mischievous of instruments are not yet all told. One of its most exasperating idiosyncrasies is that it plays when no man playeth. Other instruments wait until they are stroked or blown before they utter a sound, but from the moment that the player lets the triangle out of the bag he is on tenterhooks as to what may happen. And if he does not exercise the greatest care the triangle, vibrant with emotion (as modern novelists say), has hurled itself against the nearest music stand and has most uncharitably emitted a noise like sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. And the trouble is that no protests of innocence will exonerate the unfortunate victim of the triangle's caprice in the eyes of the conductor.

Yes, the lot of the triangularist is not a happy one; the instrument is not for persons who fear responsibility and the limelight. Many men of robust constitution have had their health wrecked through a too protracted struggle with its caprices. There is a story that a man thus ruined in health was ordered by his doctor to give up the triangle and take up something less nerve-straining. He became a solo violinist, and has now completely regained his health and good spirits. Sometimes when he is feeling particularly hale and hearty he even goes so far as to say that one day he may take up the triangle again.

ON BEING THE RIGHT SIZE¹

by J. B. S. Haldane

THE most obvious differences between different animals are differences of size, but for some reason the zoologists have paid singularly little attention to them. In a large textbook of zoology before me I find no indication that the eagle is larger than the sparrow, or the hippopotamus bigger than the hare, though some grudging admissions are made in the case of the mouse and the whale. But yet it is easy to show that a hare could not be as large as a hippopotamus, or a whale as small as a herring. For every type of animal there is a most convenient size, and a large change in size inevitably carries with it a change of form.

Let us take the most obvious of possible cases, and consider a giant man sixty feet high—about the height of Giant Pope and Giant Pagan in the illustrated *Pilgrim's Progress* of my childhood. These monsters were not only ten times as high as Christian, but ten times as wide and ten times as thick, so that their total weight was a thousand times his, or about eighty to ninety tons. Unfortunately, the cross sections of their bones were only a hundred times those of Christian, so that every square inch of giant bone had to

¹ From *Harper's Magazine*, April, 1926. Reprinted by permission.

support ten times the weight borne by a square inch of human bone. As the human thighbone breaks under about ten times the human weight, Pope and Pagan would have broken their thighs every time they took a step. This was doubtless why they were sitting down in the picture I remember. But it lessens one's respect for Christian and for Jack the Giant Killer.

To turn to zoology, suppose that a gazelle, a graceful little creature with long thin legs, is to become large—it will break its bones unless it does one of two things. It may make its legs short and thick, like the rhinoceros, so that every pound of weight has still about the same area of bone to support it. Or it can compress its body and stretch out its legs obliquely to gain stability like the giraffe. I mention these two beasts because they happen to belong to the same order as the gazelle, and both are quite successful mechanically, being remarkably fast runners.

Gravity, a mere nuisance to Christian, was a terror to Pope, Pagan, and Despair. To the mouse and any smaller animal it presents practically no dangers. You can drop a mouse down a thousand-yard mine shaft and, on arriving at the bottom, it gets a slight shock and walks away. A rat is killed, a man is broken, a horse splashes. For the resistance presented to movement by the air is proportional to the surface of the moving object. Divide an animal's length, breadth, and height each by ten; its weight is reduced to a thousandth, but its surface only to a hundredth. So the resistance to falling in the case of the small animal is relatively ten times the driving force.

An insect, therefore, is not afraid of gravity; it can fall without danger, and can cling to the ceiling with remarkably little trouble. It can go in for elegant fantastic forms of support like that of the daddy-long-legs. But there is a force which is as formidable to an insect as gravitation to a mammal. This is surface tension. A man coming out of a bath carries with him a film of water of about one-fiftieth of an inch in thickness. This weighs about a pound. A wet mouse has to carry about its own weight of water. A wet fly has to lift many times its own weight and, as everyone knows a fly once wetted by water or any other liquid is in a very serious position indeed. An insect going for a drink is in as great danger as a man leaning out over a precipice in search of food. If it once falls into the grip of the surface tension of the water—that is to say, gets wet—it is likely to remain so until it drowns. A few insects, such as water-beetles, contrive to be unwettable; the majority keep well away from their drink by means of a long proboscis.

Of course tall land animals have other difficulties. They have to pump their blood to greater heights than a man and, therefore, require a larger blood pressure and tougher blood vessels. A great many men die from burst arteries, especially in the brain, and this danger is presumably still greater for an elephant or a giraffe. But animals of all kinds find difficulties in size for the following reason: A typical small animal, say a microscopic worm or rotifer, has a smooth skin through which all the oxygen it requires can soak in, a straight gut with sufficient surface to absorb its food, and a simple kidney. Increase its dimensions tenfold in every direction, and its weight is increased

a thousand times so, that if it is to use its muscles as efficiently as its miniature counterpart, it will need a thousand times as much food and oxygen per day and will excrete a thousand times as much of waste products.

Now, if its shape is unaltered its surface will be increased only a hundred-fold, and ten times as much oxygen must enter per minute through each square millimeter of skin, ten times as much food through each square millimeter of intestine. When a limit is reached to their absorptive powers their surface has to be increased by some special device. For example, a part of the skin may be drawn out into tufts to make gills, or pushed in to make lungs, thus increasing the oxygen-absorbing surface in proportion to the animal's bulk. A man, for example, has a hundred square yards of lung. Similarly the gut, instead of being smooth and straight, becomes coiled and develops a velvety surface, and other organs increase in complication. The higher animals are not larger than the lower because they are more complicated. They are more complicated because they are larger. Just the same is true of plants. The simplest plants such as the green algæ growing in stagnant water or on the bark of trees are mere round cells. The higher plants increase their surface by putting out leaves and roots. Comparative anatomy is largely the story of the struggle to increase surface in proportion to volume.

Some of the methods of increasing the surface are useful up to a point but not capable of a very wide adaptation. For example, white vertebrates carry the oxygen from the gills or lungs all over the body in the blood, insects take air directly to every part of their body by tiny blind tubes called tracheæ which open to the surface at many different points. Now, although by their breathing movements they can renew the air in the outer part of the tracheal system, the oxygen has to penetrate the finer branches by means of diffusion. Gases can diffuse easily through very small distances, not many times larger than the average length traveled by a gas molecule between collisions with other molecules. But when such vast journeys—from the point of view of a molecule—as a quarter of an inch have to be made, the process becomes slow. So the portions of an insect's body more than a quarter of an inch from the air would always be short of oxygen. In consequence hardly any insects are much more than half an inch thick. Land crabs are built on the same general plan as insects, but are much clumsier. Yet, like ourselves, they carry round oxygen in their blood, and are therefore able to grow far larger than any insect. If the insects had hit on a plan for driving air through their tissues instead of letting it soak in, they might well have become as large as lobsters, though other considerations would have prevented them from becoming as large as man.

Exactly the same difficulties attach to flying. It is an elementary principle of aeronautics that the minimum speed needed to keep an airplane of given shape in the air varies as the square root of its length. If it is four times as big each way it must fly twice as fast. Now the power needed for the minimum speed increases more rapidly than the weight of the machine. Of the two airplanes considered above, the larger weighs sixty-four times as much as the

smaller but needs one hundred and twenty-eight times its horsepower to keep up. Applying the same principles to the birds, we find that the limit to their size is soon reached. An angel whose muscles developed no more power weight for weight than those of an eagle or pigeon would require a breast projecting for about four feet to house the muscles engaged in working its wings, while to economize in weight, its legs would have to be reduced to mere stults. Actually a large bird such as an eagle or kite does not keep in the air mainly by moving its wings. It is generally to be seen soaring, that is to say balanced on a rising column of air. But even soaring becomes more and more difficult with increasing size. Were this not the case eagles might be as large as tigers and as formidable to man as hostile airplanes.

But it is time that we passed to some of the advantages of size. One of the most obvious is that it enables one to keep warm. All warm-blooded animals at rest lose the same amount of heat from a unit area of skin, for which purpose they need a food-supply proportional to their surface and not to their weight. Five thousand mice weigh as much as a man. Their surface and food, or oxygen consumption, are about seventeen times a man's. In fact a mouse eats about one-quarter of its own weight of food every day, which is mainly used in keeping it warm. For the same reason small animals cannot live in wild countries. In the arctic regions there are no reptiles or amphibians, and no small mammals. The smallest mammal in Spitzbergen is the fox. The small birds fly away in the winter, while the insects die, though their eggs can survive six months or more of frost. The most successful mammals are bears, seals, and walruses.

Similarly, the eye is a rather inefficient organ until it reaches a large size. The back of the human eye on which an image of the outside world is thrown and which corresponds to the film of a camera, is composed of a mosaic of "rods and cones" whose diameter is little more than the length of an average light wave. Each eye has about half a million, and for two objects to be distinguishable their images must fall on separate rods or cones. It is obvious that with fewer but larger rods and cones we should see less distinctly. If they were twice as broad, two points would have to be twice as far apart before we could distinguish them at a given distance. But if their size were diminished and their number increased we should see no better. For it is impossible to form a definite image smaller than a wave-length of light. Hence a mouse's eye is not a small-scale model of a human eye. Its rods and cones are not much smaller than ours, and therefore there are far fewer of them. A mouse could not distinguish one human face from another six feet away. In order that they should be of any use at all, the eyes of small animals have to be much larger in proportion to their bodies than our own. Large animals on the other hand require only relatively small eyes, and those of the whale and elephant are little larger than our own.

For rather more recondite reasons the same general principle holds true of the brain. If we compare the brain-weights of a set of very similar animals such as the cat, cheetah, leopard, and tiger, we find that as we quadruple the

body-weight the brain-weight is only doubled. The larger animal with proportionately larger bones can economize on brain, eyes, and certain other organs.

Such are a very few of the considerations which show that for every type of animal there is an optimum size. Yet although Galileo demonstrated the contrary more than three hundred years ago, people still believe that if a flea were as large as a man it could jump a thousand feet into the air. As a matter of fact the height to which an animal can jump is more nearly independent of its size than proportional to it. A flea can jump about two feet, a man about seven. To jump a given height, if we neglect the resistance of the air, requires an expenditure of energy proportional to the jumper's weight. But if the jumping muscles form a constant fraction of the animal's body, the energy developed per ounce of muscle is independent of the size, provided it can be developed quickly enough in the small animal. As a matter of fact an insect's muscles, although they can contract more quickly than our own, appear to be less efficient, as otherwise a flea or grasshopper could rise six feet into the air.

And just as there is a best size for every animal, so the same is true for every human institution. In the Greek type of democracy all the citizens could listen to a series of orators and vote directly on questions of legislation. Hence their philosophers held that a small city was the largest possible democratic state. The English invention of representative government made a democratic nation possible and the possibility was first realized in the United States, and later elsewhere. With the development of broadcasting it has once more become possible for every citizen to listen to the political views of representative orators, and the future may perhaps see the return of the national state to the Greek form of democracy. Even the referendum has been made possible only by the institution of daily newspapers.

To the biologists the problem of socialism appears largely as a problem of size. The socialists desire to run every nation as a single business concern. I do not suppose that Henry Ford would find much difficulty in running Andorra or Luxembourg on a socialistic basis. He has already more men on his payroll than their population. It is conceivable that a syndicate of Fords, if we could find them, would make Belgium Ltd. or Denmark Inc. pay their way. But while nationalization of certain industries is an obvious possibility in the largest of states, I find it no easier to picture a completely socialized British Empire or United States than an elephant turning somersaults or a hippopotamus jumping a hedge.

RADIO TAXI¹*by Heywood Broun*

THEY tell me that radio is still in its infancy, and sometimes I wish it would stay there.

I like it for football games and for Stoopnagle and Bud and Jack Benny and Rudy Vallee and Burns and Allen and the speeches of John P. O'Brien. But I want radio only when I want it. I have no desire to have it sneak up on me.

This morning at nine minutes past eight I hailed a taxi in a heavy traffic jam. My nerves are never much good before noon, and so I leaped one and a half feet from the cushioned seat when a voice directly in my ear screamed out, "There's blood upon your hands, Mike Cunningham!"

"It's the radio," explained the driver. "Maybe you'd rather have a little music or a health talk."

He fumbled with the dials, and the southbound truck missed us by about five inches.

"Just let it ride," I expostulated. "I'd rather take my chances with the murder mystery."

"I can make it louder," he suggested as the motorman jammed on his brakes and failed to hit us.

"Volume, subject matter and treatment are all perfectly swell," I assured him. "I'd like to reach 120 Broadway before nine o'clock."

"You will now hear the second episode in the story of Count Mephisto," said the announcer. "Jack has told Alice that Mary will not die because of the poison, but Nancy in a fit of jealousy has just bought a stiletto, which she has hidden in her blouse. Harold, of course, knows nothing of this, and Mrs. Preston is still in Chicago."

"Lucky Harold, lucky Mrs. Preston," I thought to myself.

"The plans of the diamond mine are hidden in the floor of Ralph's Park Ave. apartment," continued the announcer, "but Ah Fong saw his master place them there and is awaiting his chance to steal them. But first, of course, he must give Terry the slip."

I rapped on the window and warned the driver not to come quite so close to the elevated railroad pillars, and it must be that even in the brief altercation which followed I missed something of the plot, for when I leaned back into the seat again I distinctly heard:—"And every one of our overcoats is guaranteed not to shrink or change color in six months. And, remember, these genuine Scotch cheviots can be obtained on easy payments."

"And with the beginning of the third episode," another voice broke in, "we

¹ By permission of the New York *World-Telegram*.

find that Millicent has fallen into a swoon upon hearing of the discovery of Ralph's body in the rest room of the Canal St. subway station."

I didn't see how anybody could blame Millicent. It came as a distinct shock to me. Only a few minutes ago Ralph had been burying the diamond mine plans in his floor, like any self-respecting New York householder, and here he was already stabbed to the heart with an ivory paper knife tipped with a curious South American drug, but, after all, this is the age of rapid transportation.

"Why," I asked the driver, "do we have to go down West St. in order to get to 120 Broadway?"

"If anybody makes a move I'll have my men shoot to kill!" rang out a commanding voice, and I slumped back in my seat.

"That's Inspector Corrigan," said the driver reassuringly. "He always gets his man. I had him on yesterday at this same time. The mystery of the killer with three thumbs. That's how I bent my right fender. He broke into Slattery's cellar den, and I passed a red light."

The lights were against us now, and I asked, respectfully, "Would you mind terribly much if I wanted a little music instead of this mystery play?"

"Sure," answered the driver. "The passenger is always right. That's the motto of these radio cabs."

He twisted the knob, and a baritone bellowed, "Git along, little doogie; git along!" I love music, and I think "The Last Roundup" is one of the finest American songs ever written. But I don't want to be told at 8:30 in the morning that General Custer and Buffalo Bill and I will all be riding. Even if it is the last roundup I refuse to do any riding.

"Bring back the mystery story," I said feebly.

"Inspector, this paper cutter which was imbedded behind Millicent's right ear is the identical weapon with which Ralph Dowling was murdered in the subway!"

We drew up in front of 120, but the thing had begun to get me. "Never mind that \$10,000 deal," I said to the taxi man. "Drive me twice around the park. I want to hear how it turns out."

EL DORADO¹

by Robert Louis Stevenson

IT seems as if a great deal were attainable in a world where there are so many marriages and decisive battles, and where all, at certain hours of the day, and with great gusto and despatch, stow a portion of victuals finally and irretrievably into the bag which contains us. And it would seem also, on a hasty view, that the attainment of as much as possible was the

¹ By permission of Charles Scribner's Sons.

one goal of man's contentious life. And yet, as regards the spirit, this is but a semblance. We live in an ascending scale when we live happily, one thing leading to another in an endless series. There is always a new horizon for onward-looking men, and although we dwell on a small planet, immersed in petty business and not enduring beyond a brief period of years, we are so constituted that our hopes are inaccessible, like stars, and the term of hoping is prolonged until the term of life. To be truly happy is a question of how we begin and not of how we end, of what we want and not of what we have. An aspiration is a joy for ever, a possession as solid as a landed estate, a fortune which we can never exhaust and which gives us year by year a revenue of pleasurable activity. To have many of these is to be spiritually rich. Life is only a very dull and ill-directed theatre unless we have some interests in the piece; and to those who have neither art nor science, the world is a mere arrangement of colours, or a rough footway where they may very well break their shins. It is in virtue of his own desires and curiosities that any man continues to exist with even patience, that he is charmed by the look of things and people, and that he awakens every morning with a renewed appetite for work and pleasure. Desire and curiosity are the two eyes through which he sees the world in the most enchanted colours: it is they that make women beautiful or fossils interesting; and the man may squander his estate and come to beggary, but if he keeps these two amulets he is still rich in the possibilities of pleasure. Suppose he could take one meal so compact and comprehensive that he should never hunger any more; suppose him, at a glance, to take in all features of the world and allay the desire for knowledge; suppose him to do the like in any province of experience—would not that man be in a poor way for amusement ever after?

One who goes touring on foot with a single volume in his knapsack reads with circumspection, pausing often to reflect, and often laying the book down to contemplate the landscape or the prints in the inn parlour; for he fears to come to the end of his entertainment, and be left companionless on the last stages of his journey. A young fellow recently finished the works of Thomas Carlyle, winding up, if we remember aright, with the ten notebooks upon Frederick the Great. "What!" cried the young fellow, in consternation, "is there no more Carlyle? Am I left to the daily papers!" A more celebrated instance is that of Alexander, who wept bitterly because he had no more worlds to subdue. And when Gibbon had finished the *Decline and Fall*, he had only a few moments of joy; and it was with a "sober melancholy" that he parted from his labours.

Happily we all shoot at the moon with ineffectual arrows; our hopes are set on inaccessible El Dorado; we come to an end of nothing here below. Interests are only plucked up to sow themselves again, like mustard. You would think when the child was born, there would be an end to trouble and yet it is only the beginning of fresh anxieties; and when you have seen it through its teething and its education, and at last its marriage, alas! it is only to have new fears, new quivering sensibilities, with every day; and the

health of your children's children grows as touching a concern as that of your own. Again, when you have married your wife, you would think you were got upon a hilltop, and might begin to go downward by an easy slope. But you have only ended courting to begin marriage. Falling in love and winning love are often difficult tasks to overbearing and rebellious spirits; but to keep in love is also a business of some importance, to which both man and wife must bring kindness and goodwill. The true love story commences at the altar, when there lies before the married pair a most beautiful contest of wisdom and generosity, and a life-long struggle towards an unattainable ideal. Unattainable? Ay, surely unattainable, from the very fact that they are two instead of one.

"Of making books there is no end," complained the Preacher; and did not perceive how highly he was praising letters as an occupation. There is no end, indeed, to making books or experiments, or to travel, or to gathering wealth. Problem gives rise to problem. We may study for ever, and we are never as learned as we would. We have never made a statue worthy of our dreams. And where we have discovered a continent, or crossed a chain of mountains, it is only to find another ocean or another plain upon the farther side. In the infinite universe there is room for our swiftest diligence and to spare. It is not like the works of Carlyle, which can be read to an end. Even in a corner of it, in a private park, or in the neighborhood of a single hamlet, the weather and the seasons keep so deftly changing that although we walk there for a life-time there will be always something new to startle and delight us.

There is only one wish realizable on the earth; only one thing that can be perfectly attained: Death. And from a variety of circumstances we have no one to tell us whether it be worth attaining.

A strange picture we make on our way to our Chimaeras, ceaselessly marching, grudging ourselves the time for rest; indefatigable, adventurous pioneers. It is true that we shall never reach the goal; it is even more than probable that there is no such place; and if we lived for centuries and were endowed with the powers of a god, we should find ourselves not much nearer what we wanted at the end. O toiling hands of mortals! O unwearied feet, travelling ye know not whither. Soon, soon, it seems to you, you must come forth on some conspicuous hilltop, and but a little way farther, against the setting sun, descry the spires of El Dorado. Little do ye know your own blessedness; for to travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive, and the true success is to labour.

EXPOSITION

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PARAGRAPHS FOR ANALYSIS

ESSAYS ON LITERATURE

THE DAILY THEME EYE¹

by Walter Prichard Eaton

WHEN I was an undergraduate at Harvard our instructors in English composition endeavored to cultivate in us a something they termed "The daily theme eye." This peculiar variety of optic, I fear, always remained a mystery to a majority of the toilers after clearness, force, and elegance. Clearness, force, and even a certain degree of elegance, may be acquired; but the daily theme eye, like the eye for the sights of a rifle, may be discovered, developed, trained—but not acquired. It comes by the grace of Heaven, not of the Harvard or any other English department, and its possession is often one of the marks of the man whose destiny compels him to write. The Harvard English department has but given it a name; it has no local habitation. It is found in Henry James and the police reporter of the *New York Sun*; it illuminates the pages of *The Harvard Monthly* (sometimes) and of George Moore. It winks at you in Heine and peers solemnly in Mrs. Humphry Ward. And it flashes and beams in a little lady I know who has written nothing save sprightly letters all the days of her life and never opened Hill's *Rhetoric* under the shade of the Washington Elm.

The fairy who stood over my cradle, though he forgot the gold spoon and much else besides, at least bestowed the gift of this wonderful optic. It brought me my college degree; for when other courses failed—which means when I failed in other courses—there was always English; it has brought me a living since; but more than all else it has brought me enjoyment, it has clothed the daily walk with interest, the teeming, noisy town with color and beauty, "the society of my contemporaries," to use Emerson's big phrase for my little purpose, with stimulating excitement. It has turned the panorama of existence into a play, or rather a thousand plays, and brought after sorrow or pain the great comfort of composition.

Daily themes in my day had to be short, not over a page of handwriting. They had to be deposited in a box at the professor's door not later than ten-five in the morning. A classmate of mine, when an epigram was called for, once wrote, "An epigram is a lazy man's daily theme written at ten-three A.M." And because of this brevity, and the necessity of writing one every day

¹ From the *Atlantic Monthly* and W. M. Tanner, *Essays and Essay Writing*. By courtesy of the Atlantic Monthly Company.

whether the mood was on you or not, it was not always easy—to be quite modest—to make these themes literature, which, we were told by our instructors, is the transmission through the written word, from writer to reader, of a mood, an emotion, a picture, an idea. I hate to think how few, in fact, of all the thousands that were poured into that yawning box were literature, how seldom the poor instructors could dip their pens into their pots of red ink and write the magic “A” on the back. Their sarcastic comments were surely excusable. I have even forgiven the young man with hair like yellow corn-tassels, who scrawled on verses of mine, required to be written in imitation of some poet, “This may be O’Shaughnessy, it isn’t poetry.” Did he think thus to kill two song birds with one stone? Well, the effort of those of us who were sincere and comprehending in our pursuit of the elusive power to write was to make our themes literature as often as possible; and to do this the first essential was the choice of a subject. Not everything one sees or does or thinks can take shape on a page of paper and reproduce itself for the reader. Selection was the first requirement.

It became needful, then, to watch for and treasure incidents that were sharply dramatic or poignant, moods that were clear and definite, pictures that created a single clean impression. The tower of Memorial seen across the quiet marshes against the cool pink sky of evening; the sweep of a shell under the bridge and the rush of the spectators to the other rail to watch the needle-bow emerge, and the bent, brown backs of the crew; the chorus girls, still rubbing the paint from their cheeks with a tiny handkerchief wrapped over the forefinger, coming out of a stage entrance into the snow; the first sharp impression of a book just read or a play just seen,—these were the things we cherished, for these we could put on a page of paper with a beginning, a middle, and an end, and with some show of vividness. What we came to do, then, was to keep a note-book of our impressions, and when in June our themes were returned to us we had a precious record for the year. By training the daily theme eye, we watched for and found in the surroundings of our life, as it passed, a heightened picturesqueness, a constant wonder, and added significance. That hardened cynic, the professional writer, will smile and say, “You saw copy.” Yes, we saw copy; but to see copy is to see the significant, to clarify what the ear and heart and eye receive, to add light and shadow to the monochrome of life.

My college roommate, a blessed boy full of good humor and serious purpose, was as incapable of acquiring the daily theme eye as a cat of obeying the eighth commandment. His idea of a daily theme was a task, not a pleasure. If there was no chance to write a political editorial, he supplied an anecdote of his summer vacation. Once he described a cliff he had seen in Newfoundland, and, determined to be pictorial, he added, “tumbling waterfalls” and “sighing pines.” Unfortunately, the instructor who read it had also been in Newfoundland, and he pointed out that his investigations of the cliff in question had failed to disclose either “tumbling waterfalls” or “sighing pines.” My roommate treated the matter as a joke; he could not see that he

had been guilty of any fault. And yet he is a much more moral man than I, with a far more troublesome conscience. Truth to his principles he would die for. But truth to the picture his mind retained and his hand tried to portray in the medium of literature, to him so trivial and unimportant, he could not grasp. What did it matter? So it would never occur to him to record in his themes the fleeting impressions of his daily life, to sit up half the night trying to pack into the clumsy frame of words the recollection of a strangely innocent face seen suddenly in the flash of an opened door down a dark, evil alley where the gusts of winter swirled. He went to bed and never knew a headache or jumpy nerve. Yet I could not help thinking then that there was something in life he was missing besides the ultimate mark in our composition course. And I cannot help thinking that there is something in life he misses still.

But perhaps that is only my fancy. George Moore says that happiness is no more than a faculty for being surprised; and it is the sudden vista, the beauty of a city square seen through falling snow, a street-car drama, the face of a passing woman, the dialogue of friends, which make the surprises for the man with the eye for copy. George Moore himself has a daily theme eye of preternatural keenness, and he may be speaking only for a class. Happiness for my roommate lies, I suspect, rather in his faculty for not being surprised. A sudden accession of emotion at the sight of an unexpected view, for instance, would probably be immensely disconcerting. And if he should go into an art museum, as I did the other day, and see a little marble boy with a slightly parted mouth wet his lips with his tongue, I truly believe he would rush off to the doctor's at once, very unhappy, instead of rushing joyfully home to try to put the illusion into a sonnet! Well, every class has its Pharisaism, which in reality isn't a form of priggishness, at all, but merely a recognition of difference. He thinks I am unpractical, a bit odd, not quite a grown man. I think he is—a charming fellow. We are about quits on that!

DOING WITHOUT WORKMANSHIP¹

by C. E. Montague

I

SURELY one of the most delectable bees that ever buzzed in a bonnet is the old dream that in art the right thing to do is to do without workmanship. From time to time it visits, in force, the minds of the young. To write, to paint, to sing—all with your soul alone and without the tainted assistance of any mere technical methods or formulae: it seems as if the

¹ From C. E. Montague, *A Writer's Notes on His Trade*. By permission of Doubleday, Doran & Co.

nobleness of life were to do this; base is the slave who fritters away the auroral freshness of his genius on the coolie work of learning how to draw, to scan or to practise scales. As the Dauphin thought of his horse, so does fond youth, at times, of its yet untrained Pegasus: "When I bestride him, I soar, I am a hawk: he trots the air: the earth sings when he touches it; the basest horn of his hoof is more musical than the pipe of Hermes." What should a creature made of pure air and fire, like this, have to do with the dull elements of metre or perspective, or the mechanical tricks of voice production or scansion? "Off, off, you lendings!" So the pleasant dream runs.

Immediately after the Great War, whole hives of bees, of this agreeable species, buzzed in the collective bonnet of youth. And with some reason. The greatest of wars had been won by commanders and general staffs whom few suspected of having polluted their natural genius with any such technical proficiency in the science of war as had been noticed in the leaders of the vanquished. It looked like the dawn of an era of triumph for good go-ahead dispensers with workmanship. Youth, besides, was at the moment enormously in favour. It had had the largest share of gruelling in the war; it had come out with credit; there was a general inclination among its elders—the youth of yesterday—to cocker it up and to say in an emotional tone that, in art and everything else, youth was the time of life when a man really knew how to do things—now it was certainly going to start everything over again, and much better, on lines that the old men, the youth of the day before yesterday, could never have thought of.

2

So youth, sped by the ancient dream that seemed so new in its own head, went the pace with a high heart. Never had there been such times for songs without a tune and portraits minus the face. We are not sure that anyone set up as a fiddle soloist on the strength of never having had a lesson from any living soul. But the best galleries in London, Paris and Berlin, abounded in pictures so unspotted by the taint of "representationism" that spectators would earnestly argue whether the scene which they kept to themselves was an Algerian market-place, a Dutch farm or an urban interior. And there were poems. A stanza of one of them, not an extreme specimen of its kind, haunts the mind:

His limbs
Dangle
Like marionettes
Over
a
mauve
Sea.

An idea, you perceive, unblemished by any application of mere workmanship. It is much as if Shakespeare had not fobbed us off with the laborious and overdone

Hark, hark, the lark at Heaven's gate sings,
 And Phoebus 'gins arise,
 His steeds to water at those springs
 On chaliced flowers that lies,

but had fairly made comrades of us, taken us into his confidence, given us the first intimate germ of the thing—perhaps

Observe the
 Lark
 Before
 Breakfast
 Grass
 still
 plaguily
 Wet.

When Corot used to go a-painting early on misty summer mornings he always knocked off work about nine o'clock. He used to say, "Everything can be seen now. And so there's nothing to see." He felt that the half was more than the whole; as soon as the elements of a landscape began to emerge from the first tender vapours enough to take definite shape, they lost part of their expressive value. Moved, perhaps, by some kindred notion, an early post-war poet produced this mist-drenched stanza:

"Haw, haw, haw, haw. . . ." ". . . surest thing you know . . ."
 "I can't stand Whitman's tripe" ". . . eh, no more gin?"
 "Dirt cheap for twenty bob" "'E got run in. . . ."
 "I soon ticked 'im orf. . . ." ". . . what a rotten show. . . ."

One wondered. Was it a first study, like a painter's for some projected masterpiece? As time went on, and the poet slept on his work a good many times, would he strike at least on what he was now only feeling—would there come to him some imperious and enchanting sense of a music which as yet was out of hearing but might be drawn within reach, captured and fixed in some happy moment of magical extension of sense and imagination? One wondered. Yes, before Swinburne attained to such a stanza as—

From too much love of living,
 From hope and fear set free,
 We thank with brief thanksgiving
 Whatever Gods may be
 That no life lives for ever;
 That dead men rise up never;
 That even the weariest river
 Winds somewhere safe to sea—

did the work pass through a stage of roughing out, when the poet jotted down on paper typical fragments of the voices of his age, perhaps with notes, like this:

Huxley: "Immortality is simply dope."
 Jowett: "Not so sure. You wait and see."

Disraeli: "The angels are the boys for me."

Tennyson: "Well, anyhow, there's just a kick in hope."

(N. B. Seems the only bomb left for me to throw is "Good riddance, the whole business.")

N. B. 2. See Baudelaire's simile of tired river.)

A critic who dared to express at the time these doubts and hopes and hesitations soon found himself in hot water. That elliptic fancy—

His limbs
Dangle
Like marionettes
Over
 a
 mauve
Sea—

had left in a poor critic a haunting sense, as yearning people say, of want, of something unfulfilled. His confession of this brought upon him a charge of "voluptuous indolence." He was suspected of craving for the flesh-pots of "conventional rotundity" and "elaborate sonority" in poetry.

But was it really he that was the idler, the sporter with Amaryllis in the shade? Had not the poet left himself an inordinate share of leisure for repose, when he ceased to meditate the thankless muse at the point reached by his lines? Would not Burns have been more voluptuously indolent than he was if he had not wrought his stanza up to the point of

We twa hae paidlet i' the burn,
Fra' morning sun till dine;
But seas between us braid hae roar'd
Sin auld lang syne,

but had left it at some such early stage as

Both of us
Once
Lived
 on
 the
Doon.
He is
 now
 in
The States.

Certainly Burns would in that case have left more to the reader's imagination. He would have left everything to it. And, in a sense, it is well to leave much to the reader's imagination. But in what sense? A well-drafted lease of a charming country house leaves a great deal to the imagination. But that, unsupported by other evidence, does not prove the solicitor who drafted it to be a poet. The "Ode to Autumn" or "Lycidas," would leave much more to the imagination if every second line were knocked out, but it would

not necessarily be improved by these lacunae. This business of leaving things to the imagination, if it were carried on with a too-unreflected ardour, might end by reducing poetry to a series of titles for poems, each followed, perhaps, by a few rows of asterisks, just to show what the poet could do an he would. In that millennium of the stimulated imagination a few indolent or miserly voluptuaries might grumble at paying for "Nocturnes" in which there were no actual words, light or dark, or for a sonnet sequence wholly composed of Roman numerals at the tops of blank pages. Still, an answer to them would be ready: the poets could make famous fun of these awkward customers. "What came ye forth for to see?" the poets might say. "The elaborate sonorities of Milton? The fair round bellies of the works of Keats?"

Perhaps the real trouble with the mauve sea-piece is not that it leaves too much to the imagination, but that it does nothing to stir it. A motorist may do well not to try to propel his car by continuous use of the starting handle in front. Still, he has to start the engine somehow. And, few as the words of the mauve sea-piece are, they are too many, in a way. None of them pulls its weight in the boat; none of them springs any vision in our dull minds, none of them helps start the engine. They have not gone through the fire from which five common words such as "brightness falls from the air" emerge with a new evocative power over the mind. They remain mere indications that the writer, a poet maybe, maybe not, has approached a subject on which he thinks that a poem might be written. He has not begun it.

3

Like other things the old hope of doing great work without workmanship undergoes changes of fashion. More kinds of cricketer than one are unable to make runs. There is the man who has studied exactly the way that Grace or Ranjitsinhji or Hobbs walks to the wicket and stands beside it, glances round at the field, and pats down the turf. He can do it all exactly as the great original did. And yet this imitator, perhaps, cannot bat. There is also the man, equally far from having power to score, who would perish sooner than run like one of those heroes who tightens his cap on his head with the same gesture as another. Both these ineffectual ones are preoccupied with inessentials, by way of aping them or of eschewing them. So is it with writers to whom the divine accident, the knack of taking fire, refuses to come. Some of them make an inordinate fuss about catching the lesser technicalities and the mannerisms of accepted masters of the trade. This kind abounded in the Victorian age, so far as there was such an age. They mimicked with precision the more obvious rhythmical tricks of "In Memoriam" and "The Blessed Damozel," they used superfluous capitals like Carlyle and treated the semicolon like Dickens. That particular way of amounting to nothing in literature is less common now. More common, for the moment, is the converse way—the alternative course of parasitism. This course is to discard the more obvious parts of the technique of all the great workmen in letters; as most

of them rhymed there must be no rhyme; as they had rhythm there must be none; as they did not write lines of one word alone, one word lines there must be. So, this way and that, oscillates the current fashion among uninspired writers who have not served any serious apprenticeship. "We shift and bedeck and bedrape us," as the convention swings to and fro, and one generation of null and void writers struts in Swinburnian arabesques of alliteration and heavy brocades of sound, and the next in such cutty sarks as these tuneless linelets of one-word apiece. But in the "pure eyes and perfect witness of all-judging Jove," we fancy it comes to much the same thing.

4

In the first years after the war there was a sort of shyness among the elder brethren of the trade of letters about recalling humdrum truths to the eager young things then capering with joy at the thought that Adam's curse was off at last and the need for workmanship gone from the world. Youth had had a bad time in the war; everybody was sorry for youth and felt rather sentimental about it. Some of the sympathy took the unlucky form of a suggestion that youth had just come into a kind of Messianic mission, and that it must not be whipped or put right any more, but looked to for the rescue of all of us and our arts from the mess that we had made.

No doubt the young, so far as their souls were in health, laughed at this gushing idealisation of themselves. But the angelic guardianship of a healthy soul could not be everywhere. Where it failed, youth must often have snuffed up the offered myrrh and frankincense without demur and agreed that there was a divine wisdom in inexperience.

To bring this about was a cruel unfairness to the youth of that day. The war had been bad for it, anyhow. Compared with the youth of earlier and later dates, it had struck a poor time to grow up in: it would have to bestir itself more than they in order to be anything but an undersized generation. Part of it had lain mentally fallow on active service during years when the mind should grow most; part had passed those adolescent years at schools lamed by losses of staff and by all-round distractions from their chief business. Peace had brought only the shabby, dispiriting spectacle of Versailles, with its base greeds and timidities, and of an England morally tired, flabby and cross. It was no hour of which to sing that it was joy to be alive in it, and heaven to be young. Small blame to clever, half-disciplined youth if it lost its head for a while, being invited so to do, and forgot for the moment the terms on which big things can be done.

All that, however, is pretty well over now, and the recuperative gift of its young tissues is showing itself with a will. The Paris picture shows of the moment, the latest plays in Berlin, the current English output of verse, all show concurrent signs that lively minded youth is losing faith in mere temperamental hurricane and formless "subjectivity," and coming back to workmanship. The tumult and the shouting die; the thunder on the Left subsides. Out of a period of confused valuations, of underrated difficulties, of

little egoisms mistaken for big individualities, youth in art is working valiantly back to a revived sense of the wonder, glory and indispensableness of workmanship.

THE NOVELS OF THOMAS HARDY¹

by Virginia Woolf

WHEN we say that the death of Thomas Hardy leaves English fiction without a leader, we mean that there is no other writer whose supremacy would be generally accepted, none to whom it seems so fitting and natural to pay homage. Nobody of course claimed it less. The unworldly and simple old man would have been painfully embarrassed by the rhetoric that flourishes on such occasions as this. Yet it is no less than the truth to say that while he lived there was one novelist at all events who made the art of fiction seem an honourable calling; while Hardy lived there was no excuse for thinking meanly of the art he practised. Nor was this solely the result of his peculiar genius. Something of it sprang from his character in its modesty and integrity, from his life, lived simply down in Dorsetshire without self-seeking or self-advertisement. For both reasons, because of his genius and because of the dignity with which his gift was used, it was impossible not to honour him as an artist and to feel respect and affection for the man. But it is of the work that we must speak, of the novels that were written so long ago that they seem as detached from the fiction of the moment as Hardy himself was remote from the stir of the present and its littleness.

We have to go back more than a generation if we are to trace the career of Hardy as a novelist. In the year 1871 he was a man of thirty-one; he had written a novel, *Desperate Remedies*, but he was by no means an assured craftsman. He "was feeling his way to a method," he said himself; as if he were conscious that he possessed all sorts of gifts, yet did not know their nature, or how to use them to advantage. To read that first novel is to share in the perplexity of its author. The imagination of the writer is powerful and sardonic; he is book-learned in a home-made way; he can create characters but he cannot control them; he is obviously hampered by the difficulties of his technique and, what is more singular, he is driven by some sense that human beings are the sport of forces outside themselves, to make use of an extreme and even melodramatic use of coincidence. He is already possessed of the conviction that a novel is not a toy, nor an argument; it is a means of giving truthful if harsh and violent impressions of the lives of men

¹ From Virginia Woolf, *The Common Reader, Second Series*. By permission of Harcourt Brace and Co.

and women. But perhaps the most remarkable quality in the book is the sound that echoes and booms through its pages of a waterfall. It is the first manifestation of the power that was to assume such vast proportions in the later books. He already proves himself a minute and skilled observer of nature; the rain, he knows, falls differently as it falls upon roots or arable; he knows that the wind sounds differently as it passes through the branches of different trees. But he is aware in a larger sense of Nature as a force; he feels in it a spirit that can sympathise or mock or remain the indifferent spectator of human fortunes. Already that sense was his; and the crude story of Miss Aldclyffe and Cytherea is memorable because it is watched by the eyes of the gods, and worked out in the presence of Nature.

That he was a poet should have been obvious; that he was a novelist might still have been held uncertain. But the year after, when *Under the Greenwood Tree* appeared, it was clear that much of the effort of "feeling for a method" had been overcome. Something of the stubborn originality of the earlier book was lost. The second is accomplished, charming, idyllic compared with the first. The writer, it seems, may well develop into one of our English landscape painters, whose pictures are all of cottage gardens and old peasant women, who lingers to collect and preserve from oblivion the old-fashioned ways and words which are rapidly falling into disuse. And yet what kindly lover of antiquity, what naturalist with a microscope in his pocket, what scholar solicitous for the changing shapes of language, ever heard the cry of a small bird killed in the next wood by an owl with such intensity? The cry "passed into the silence without mingling with it." Again we hear, very far away, like the sound of a gun out at sea on a calm summer's morning, a strange and ominous echo. But as we read these early books there is a sense of waste. There is a feeling that Hardy's genius was obstinate and perverse; first one gift would have its way with him and then another. They would not consent to run together easily in harness. Such indeed was likely to be the fate of a writer who was at once poet and realist, a faithful son of field and down, yet tormented by the doubts and despondencies bred of book-learning; a lover of old ways and plain countrymen, yet doomed to see the faith and flesh of his forefathers turn into thin and spectral transparencies before his eyes.

To this contradiction Nature had added another element likely to disorder a symmetrical development. Some writers are born conscious of everything; others are unconscious of many things. Some, like Henry James and Flaubert, are able not merely to make the best use of the spoil their gifts bring in, but control their genius in the act of creation; they are aware of all the possibilities of every situation, and are never taken by surprise. The unconscious writers, on the other hand, like Dickens and Scott, seem suddenly and without their own consent to be lifted up and swept onwards. The wave sinks and they cannot say what has happened or why. Among them—it is the source of his strength and of his weakness—we must place Hardy. His own word, "moments of vision," exactly describes those passages of astonishing

beauty and force which are to be found in every book that he wrote. With a sudden quickening of power which we cannot foretell, nor he, it seems, control, a single scene breaks off from the rest. We see, as if it existed alone and for all time, the wagon with Fanny's dead body inside travelling along the road under the dripping trees; we see the bloated sheep struggling among the clover; we see Troy flashing his sword round Bathsheba where she stands motionless, cutting the lock off her head and spitting the caterpillar on her breast. Vivid to the eye, but not to the eye alone, for every sense participates, such scenes dawn upon us and their splendour remains. But the power goes as it comes. The moment of vision is succeeded by long stretches of plain daylight, nor can we believe that any craft or skill could have caught the wild power and turned it to a better use. The novels therefore are full of inequalities; they are lumpish and dull and inexpressive; but they are never arid; there is always about them a little blur of unconsciousness, that halo of freshness and margin of the unexpressed which often produce the most profound sense of satisfaction. It is as if Hardy himself were not quite aware of what he did, as if his consciousness held more than he could produce, and he left it for his readers to make out his full meaning and to supplement it from their own experience.

For these reasons Hardy's genius was uncertain in development, uneven in accomplishment, but, when the moment came, magnificent in achievement. The moment came, completely and fully, in *Far from the Madding Crowd*. The subject was right; the method was right; the poet and the countryman, the sensual man, the sombre reflective man, the man of learning, all enlisted to produce a book which, however fashions may chop and change, must hold its place among the great English novels. There is, in the first place, that sense of the physical world which Hardy more than any novelist can bring before us; the sense that the little prospect of man's existence is ringed by a landscape which, while it exists apart, yet confers a deep and solemn beauty upon his drama. The dark downland, marked by the barrows of the dead and the huts of shepherds, rises against the sky, smooth as a wave of the sea, but solid and eternal; rolling away to the infinite distance, but sheltering in its folds quiet villages whose smoke rises in frail columns by day, whose lamps burn in the immense darkness by night. Gabriel Oak tending his sheep up there on the back of the world is the eternal shepherd; the stars are ancient beacons; and for ages he has watched beside his sheep. ✓

But down in the valley the earth is full of warmth and life; the farms are busy, the barns stored, the fields loud with the lowing of cattle and the bleating of sheep. Nature is prolific, splendid, and lustful; not yet malignant and still the Great Mother of labouring men. And now for the first time Hardy gives full play to his humour, where it is freest and most rich, upon the lips of country men. Jan Coggan and Henry Fray and Joseph Poorgress gather in the malthouse when the day's work is over and give vent to that half-shrewd, half-poetic humour which has been brewing in their brains and finding expression over their beer since the pilgrims tramped the Pilgrims'

Way; which Shakespeare and Scott and George Eliot all loved to overhear, but none loved better or heard with greater understanding than Hardy. But it is not the part of the peasants in the Wessex novels to stand out as individuals. They compose a pool of common wisdom, of common humour, a fund of perpetual life. They comment upon the actions of the hero and heroine, but while Troy or Oak or Fanny or Bathsheba come in and out and pass away, Jan Coggan and Henry Fray and Joseph Poorgrass remain. They drink by night and they plough the fields by day. They are eternal. We meet them over and over again in the novels, and they always have something typical about them, more of the character that marks a race than of the features which belong to an individual. The peasants are the great sanctuary of sanity, the country the last stronghold of happiness. When they disappear, there is no hope for the race.

With Oak and Troy and Bathsheba and Fanny Robin we come to the men and women of the novels at their full stature. In every book three or four figures predominate, and stand up like lightning conductors to attract the force of the elements. Oak and Troy and Bathsheba; Eustacia, Wildeve, and Venn; Henchard, Lucetta, and Farfrae; Jude, Sue Bridehead, and Phillotson. There is even a certain likeness between the different groups. They live as individuals and they differ as individuals; but they also live as types and have a likeness as types. Bathsheba is Bathsheba, but she is a woman and sister to Eustacia and Lucetta and Sue; Gabriel Oak is Gabriel Oak, but he is man and brother to Henchard, Venn, and Jude. However lovable and charming Bathsheba may be, she is still weak; however stubborn and ill-guided Henchard may be, still he is strong. This is a fundamental part of Hardy's vision; the staple of many of his books. The woman is the weaker and the fleshlier, and she clings to the stronger and obscures his vision. How freely, nevertheless, in his greater books life is poured over the unalterable frame-work! When Bathsheba sits in the wagon among her plants, smiling at her own loveliness in the little looking-glass, we may know, and it is proof of Hardy's power that we do know, how severely she will suffer and cause others to suffer before the end. But the moment has all the bloom and beauty of life. And so it is, time and time again. His characters, both men and women, were creatures to him of an infinite attraction. For the women he shows a more tender solicitude than for the men, and in them, perhaps, he takes a keener interest. Vain might their beauty be and terrible their fate, but while the glow of life is in them their step is free, their laughter sweet, and theirs is the power to sink into the breast of Nature and become part of her silence and solemnity, or to rise and put on them the movement of the clouds and the wildness of the flowering woodlands. The men who suffer, not like the women through dependence upon other human beings, but through conflict with fate, enlist our sterner sympathies. For such a man as Gabriel Oak we need have no passing fears. Honour him we must, though it is not granted us to love him quite so freely. He is firmly set upon his feet and can give as shrewd a blow, to men at least, as any he is likely to

receive. He has a prevision of what is to be expected that springs from character rather than from education. He is stable in his temperament, steadfast in his affections, and capable of open-eyed endurance without flinching. But he, too, is no puppet. He is a homely, humdrum fellow on ordinary occasions. He can walk the street without making people turn to stare at him. In short, nobody can deny Hardy's power—the true novelist's power—to make us believe that his characters are fellow-beings driven by their own passions and idiosyncrasies, while they have—and this is the poet's gift—something symbolical about them which is common to us all.

And it is when we are considering Hardy's power of creating men and women that we become most conscious of the profound differences that distinguish him from his peers. We look back at a number of these characters and ask ourselves what it is that we remember them for. We recall their passions. We remember how deeply they have loved each other and often with what tragic results. We remember the faithful love of Oak for Bathsheba; the tumultuous but fleeting passions of men like Wildeve, Troy, and Fitzpiers; we remember the filial love of Clym for his mother, the jealous paternal passion of Henchard for Elizabeth Jane. But we do not remember how they have loved. We do not remember how they talked and changed and got to know each other, finely, gradually, from step to step and from stage to stage. Their relationship is not composed of those intellectual apprehensions and subtleties of perception which seem so slight yet are so profound. In all the books love is one of the great facts that mould human life. But it is a catastrophe; it happens suddenly and overwhelmingly, and there is little to be said about it. The talk between the lovers when it is not passionate is practical or philosophic, as though the discharge of their daily duties left them with more desire to question life and its purpose than to investigate each other's sensibilities. Even if it were in their power to analyse their emotions, life is too stirring to give them time. They need all their strength to deal with the downright blows, the freakish ingenuity, the gradually increasing malignity of fate. They have none to spend upon the subtleties and delicacies of the human comedy.

Thus there comes a time when we can say with certainty that we shall not find in Hardy some of the qualities that have given us most delight in the works of other novelists. He has not the perfection of Jane Austen, or the wit of Meredith, or the range of Thackeray, or Tolstoy's amazing intellectual power. There is in the work of the great classical writers a finality of effect which places certain of their scenes, apart from the story, beyond the reach of change. We do not ask what bearing they have upon the narrative, nor do we make use of them to interpret problems which lie on the outskirts of the scene. A laugh, a blush, half a dozen words of dialogue, and it is enough; the source of our delight is perennial. But Hardy has none of this concentration and completeness. His light does not fall directly upon the human heart. It passes over it and out on to the darkness of the heath and upon the trees swaying in the storm. When we look back into the room the

group by the fireside is dispersed. Each man or woman is battling with the storm, alone, revealing himself most when he is least under the observation of other human beings. We do not know them as we know *Pierre* or *Natasha* or *Becky Sharp*. We do not know them in and out and all round as they are revealed to the casual caller, to the Government official, to the great lady, to the general on the battlefield. We do not know the complication and involvement and turmoil of their thoughts. Geographically too, they remain fixed to the same stretch of the English countryside. It is seldom, and always with unhappy results, that Hardy leaves the yeoman or farmer to describe the class above theirs in the social scale. In the drawing-room and clubroom and ballroom, where people of leisure and education come together, where comedy is bred and shades of character revealed, he is awkward and ill at ease. But the opposite is equally true. If we do not know his men and women in their relations to each other, we know them in their relations to time, death, and fate. If we do not see them in quick agitation against the lights and crowds of cities, we see them against the earth, the storm, and the seasons. We know their attitude towards some of the most tremendous problems that can confront mankind. They take on a more than mortal size in memory. We see them, not in detail but enlarged and dignified. We see *Tess* reading the baptismal service in her nightgown "with an impress of dignity that was almost regal." We see *Marty South*, "like a being who had rejected with indifference the attribute of sex for the loftier quality of abstract humanism," laying the flowers on *Winterbourne's* grave. Their speech has a Biblical dignity and poetry. They have a force in them which cannot be defined, a force of love or of hate, a force which in the men is the cause of rebellion against life, and in the women implies an illimitable capacity for suffering, and it is this which dominates the character and makes it unnecessary that we should see the finer features that lie hid. This is the tragic power; and, if we are to place Hardy among his fellows, we must call him the greatest tragic writer among English novelists.

But let us, as we approach the danger-zone of Hardy's philosophy, be on our guard. Nothing is more necessary, in reading an imaginative writer, than to keep at the right distance above his page. Nothing is easier, especially with a writer of marked idiosyncrasy, than to fasten on opinions, convict him of a creed, tether him to a consistent point of view. Nor was Hardy any exception to the rule that the mind which is most capable of receiving impressions is very often the least capable of drawing conclusions. It is for the reader, steeped in the impression, to supply the comment. It is his part to know when to put aside the writer's conscious intention in favour of some deeper intention of which, perhaps he may be unconscious. Hardy himself was aware of this. A novel "is an impression, not an argument," he has warned us, and again:

Unadjusted impressions have their value, and the road to a true philosophy of life seems to lie in humbly recording diverse readings of its phenomena as they are forced upon us by chance and change.

Certainly it is true to say of him that, at his greatest, he gives us impressions; at his weakest, arguments. In *the Woodlanders*, *The Return of The Native*, *Far from the Madding Crowd*, and above all, in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, we have Hardy's impression of life as it came to him without conscious ordering. Let him once begin to tamper with his direct intuitions and his power is gone. "Did you say the stars were worlds, Tess?" asks little Abraham as they drive to market with their beehives. Tess replies that they are like "the apples on our stubborn-tree, most of them splendid and sound—a few blighted." "Which do we live on—a splendid or a blighted one?" "A blighted one," she replies, or rather the mournful thinker who has assumed her mask speaks for her. The words protrude, cold and raw, like the springs of a machine where we had seen only flesh and blood. We are crudely jolted out of that mood of sympathy which is renewed a moment later when the little cart is run down and we have a concrete instance of the ironical methods which rule our planet.

That is the reason why *Jude the Obscure* is the most painful of all Hardy's books, and the only one against which we can fairly bring the charge of pessimism. In *Jude the Obscure* argument is allowed to dominate impression, with the result that though the misery of the book is overwhelming it is not tragic. As calamity succeeds calamity we feel that the case against society is not being argued fairly or with profound understanding of the facts. Here is nothing of that width and force and knowledge of mankind which, when Tolstoy criticises society, makes his indictment formidable. Here we have revealed to us the petty cruelty of men, not the large injustice of the gods. It is only necessary to compare *Jude the Obscure* with *The Mayor of Casterbridge* to see where Hardy's true power lay. Jude carries on his miserable contest against the deans of colleges and the conventions of sophisticated society. Henchard is pitted, not against another man, but against something outside himself which is opposed to men of his ambition and power. No human being wishes him ill. Even Farfrae and Newson and Elizabeth Jane, whom he has wronged, all come to pity him, and even to admire his strength of character. He is standing up to fate, and in backing the old Mayor whose ruin has been largely his own fault, Hardy makes us feel that we are backing human nature in an unequal contest. There is no pessimism here. Throughout the book we are aware of the sublimity of the issue, and yet it is presented to us in the most concrete form. From the opening scene in which Henchard sells his wife to the sailor at the fair to his death on Egdon Heath the vigour of the story is superb, its humour rich and racy, its movement large-limbed and free. The skimmity ride, the fight between Farfrae and Henchard in the loft, Mrs. Cuxsom's speech upon the death of Mrs. Henchard, the talk of the ruffians at Peter's Finger with Nature present in the background or mysteriously dominating the foreground, are among the glories of English fiction. Brief and scanty, it may be, is the measure of happiness allowed to each, but so long as the struggle is, as Henchard's was, with the decrees of fate and not with the laws of man, so long as it is in the open air and calls

for activity of the body rather than of the brain, there is greatness in the contest, there is pride and pleasure in it, and the death of the broken corn merchant in his cottage on Egdon Heath is comparable to the death of Ajax lord of Salamis. The true tragic emotion is ours.

Before such power as this we are made to feel that the ordinary tests which we apply to fiction are futile enough. Do we insist that a great novelist shall be a master of melodious prose? Hardy was no such thing. He feels his way by dint of sagacity and uncompromising sincerity to the phrase he wants, and it is often of unforgettable pungency. Failing it, he will make do with any homely or clumsy or old-fashioned turn of speech, now of the utmost angularity, now of a bookish elaboration. No style in literature, save Scott's, is so difficult to analyse; it is on the face of it so bad, yet it achieves its aim so unmistakably. As well might one attempt to rationalise the charm of a muddy country road, or of a plain field of roots in winter. And then, like Dorsetshire itself, out of these very elements of stiffness and angularity his prose will put on greatness; will roll with a Latin sonority; will shape itself in a massive and monumental symmetry like that of his own bare downs. Then again, do we require that a novelist shall observe the probabilities, and keep close to reality? To find anything approaching the violence and convolution of Hardy's plots one must go back to the Elizabethan drama. Yet we accept his story completely as we read it; more than that, it becomes obvious that his violence and his melodrama, when they are not due to a curious peasant-like love of the monstrous for its own sake, are part of that wild spirit of poetry which saw with intense irony and grimness that no reading of life can possibly outdo the strangeness of life itself, no symbol of caprice and unreason be too extreme to represent the astonishing circumstances of our existence.

But as we consider the great structure of the Wessex novels it seems irrelevant to fasten on little points—this character, that scene, this phrase of deep and poetic beauty. It is something larger that Hardy has bequeathed to us. The Wessex novels are not one book, but many. They cover an immense stretch; inevitably they are full of imperfections—some are failures, and others exhibit only the wrong side of their maker's genius. But undoubtedly, when we have submitted ourselves fully to them, when we come to take stock of our impressions of the whole, the effect is commanding and satisfactory. We have been freed from the cramp and pettiness imposed by life. Our imaginations have been stretched and heightened; our humour has been made to laugh out; we have drunk deep of the beauty of the earth. Also we have been made to enter the shade of a sorrowful and brooding spirit which, even in its saddest mood, bore itself with a grave uprightness and never, even when most moved to anger, lost its deep compassion for the sufferings of men and women. Thus it is no mere transcript of life at a certain time and place that Hardy has given us. It is a vision of the world and of man's lot as they revealed themselves to a powerful imagination, a profound and poetic genius, a gentle and humane soul.

THE PURSUIT OF VALUES IN FICTION¹

by Dorothy Brewster and Angus Burrell

I

ANATOLE FRANCE, speaking once of the books he had written for children, said he was always afraid of not succeeding: "It is much easier to write for men than for the little monkeys. One persuades men that it is the proper thing to read such and such a book. And they read it and praise it. When a child is bored, he tears the page and makes a paper doll or a boat."

The child's attitude is an honest one. Some adults retain this attitude, reading what pleases them, flinging aside what doesn't, and not concerning themselves with the tastes of others or the reasons for their own likes and dislikes. But most of us by the time we are grown up have had a little training in ethics and esthetics. We feel an obligation to appreciate what is considered good, morally or artistically, and to give our reasons. So we talk of plot and characterization, of what is "convincing" and what is "unreal," of "significance" and "sound psychology," of "message" and "local color" and "truth to life." One praises a book, another damns the same book; to the first the characters are convincing and the plot beautifully proportioned, to the second the same characters are unreal and the same plot badly constructed. These sharply contradictory judgments are expressed in the same technical phrases of criticism that we have been taught to use by teachers, critics, and reviewers. But under the shop-worn formulas lurk intimate personal responses to the book of which we are often unaware. The circumstances under which we read it may predispose us to approval or disapproval; a half forgotten experience may be at work, unlocking our imagination or bolting the door; some unacknowledged prejudice is obscurely active; or some psychological need, proceeding from the unsatisfied impulses that every human being has or the deep-seated inner conflicts that few escape, makes us love or hate the book with a fervor difficult for us to understand. It is no easy matter to trace these intimate personal relations with a book. We need a Socrates to conduct the inquiry, with our favorite psychologist at his elbow to prompt him. Instead we have a few teachers and critics and a few hundred student readers of varying ages, willing but not always able to explore their preferences in fiction.

There was an intelligent young man in a University Extension course whose academic training had been interrupted by the War, but it had left in his mind a débris of critical phrases which he automatically used when asked

¹ Adapted from *Adventure or Experience*, Columbia University Press, 1930. By permission of the authors.

his opinion of a novel. He picked out Jack London's *Valley of the Moon* as the best novel he had ever read. It took a couple of weeks to discover why he really liked that book: "Last summer," he ultimately wrote, "when recovering from an accident, I sat out in the park while a young lady read the story aloud. A cool breeze ruffled the leaves of the tree under which we sat, the birds sang, the flowers were in bloom, and the lady had a voice that was pleasant to hear. Row-boats floated on the lagoon near-by, and further off I could see tennis players hopping about after a little ball, while I sat next to the charming young lady. I liked the book for the struggles of the hero. I am very fond of struggles, provided they are someone else's. The tennis players, the boaters, the children playing tag, the motorists, and the hero of the book—all were struggling. So you see I was very happy. It really is a good book, though."

A reader who deeply enjoyed Hamsun's *Growth of the Soil*, because it revived for her the delightful memory of her childhood summers on a Vermont farm, was repelled by Nexø's labor-epic, *Pelle the Conqueror*. "The word strike recalls to my mind my mother's face as the riot call sounded in Lawrence one Friday in 1912." Her father was a mill official, sympathetic with the strike, but bound to protect the mill property at the risk of his life. "I remember the militia camped in the basement of the mill, the soldiers forcing us to move on in the streets, the broken street car windows, the soup kitchens, my hungry schoolmates, many of them fed in our home, and over and over again my father's haggard face. Nexø's picture of economic complexities is too well-drawn. Unless I can act, I had rather not consider it."

Psycho-analysts assure us that we cannot discover our own complexes. They tell us that if we are fascinated by a writer who has a certain psychosis, we ourselves probably share that psychosis, and that is why the "release" he has achieved for himself in art gives us also satisfaction. But some romantically-minded readers, so illumined, begin to detect in themselves all sorts of delightful perversities. A young woman read *Crime and Punishment* and in its murky light inspected her own past; for she was disturbed at her own enthusiasm over the murder and surprised at the profound sense of relief at the close of the reading. Had she always longed to see a murder—or was it possible she had craved to commit one? There had been a time some years before when she had been "very morbid"; she had wanted to be alone all the time, when not wandering about the streets; "I remembered that when I saw a dog or a cat, I would kick it, throw stones at it, torture it." Convinced that she must have been a budding Raskolnikov, she expressed her gratitude to Dostoevsky for relieving her of the heavy burden resting on what she brilliantly called her "subconscious" mind.

The repression that counts, in these hidden dramas of personality, is of course the one of which we are truly unconscious. But there are many aspects of our relation to a novel that we can detect after some reflection. One reader enjoyed *If Winter Comes* and declared the author a master of character portrayal; later she realized that she read it when she was feeling

"a total failure," it made her "quite fond of herself." Her self-satisfaction was disguised as praise of the author.

In a discussion about Somerset Maugham's *Of Human Bondage*, one disputant argued effectively enough that it was in this, that, and the other respect a poor novel; to every point made in its favor, she had a good answer. But presently the real reason for her attitude to the book flashed upon her; her name was Mildred; the odiously genteel, anæmic waitress who holds the hero in degrading bondage is named Mildred. Somewhere below the threshold of her grown-up mind she resented the identification of these Mildreds. But no grown-up mind would acknowledge so childish a reason for taking a dislike to a book, until its rational defenses had been captured one after the other in the argument. Tracking down these personal secrets may open the way to a more impersonal contemplation of values.

It is worth while to set down some of the simpler conclusions to be drawn from these reading experiences of people of diverse temperaments, varying ages, different backgrounds; people who exhibit every kind of psychological need; yet who all desire to be discriminating in their reading and critical in at least a rudimentary fashion. A few complain that the effort at analysis destroys their naïve pleasure in reading; not a few find it destroying their equally naïve pleasure in themselves; some discover in it a new and delightful way of talking about themselves—they love the confessional and their confessions have to be scrutinized carefully before one erects theories of criticism upon them. Others find it interesting and often illuminating.

The experience of the young man with Jack London shows that the circumstances under which one happens to read a book may account for the impression it makes. That sounds utterly obvious. But it is often ignored or forgotten when the reader turns critic. A woman who prefers sophisticated books responded warmly to *The Growth of the Soil* because she happened to read it on her return to New York from wide-open spaces somewhere; and the rush of the city made life seem a meaningless jumble; so that the simple strength, order and purpose in Isak's life satisfied a need. A nurse, taking a correspondence course in fiction, found herself having to read *The Ambassadors* "to the tune of the psychopathic ward" in the hospital. "Strether's complicated brain-storms over Chad Newsome's morals were frequently interrupted by the would-be suicide who tried to tear the bandages from the throat he had failed to cut efficiently; and there was a slender-pale-faced woman of forty who washed her hands and washed her hands ceaselessly." All this variety of the "real" made what the nurse called James's delicate flicking of butterflies from petals seem artificial and absurd. She criticized him for writing about unimportant experiences and not about the "roots of things." But to another woman who had just suffered a pronounced change of attitude towards life, James in *The Ambassadors* was a profoundly satisfying novelist because he pictured men and women in the throes of facing about: "I emerged refreshed and happy. It is just as when one has been trying to spell out a book in the twilight, and suddenly the lamp comes in."

We have been led on into more complicated aspects of the reader's relation to the novel, where interpretation becomes more hazardous. Whenever a comment reveals intense dislike of a book or character, some obsession or complex may be at work, unsuspected by its owner; and we have to read between the lines and risk a guess that by a lucky chance may receive confirmation later. A young man criticized Sudermann's *Dame Care* as a third-rate novel, but he could muster few reasons for the opinion that stood their ground under questioning. It turned out that he hated Sudermann's portrait of Paul's father—as fool, or villain, or both. He realized that his attitude to the book was determined by the similarity between Paul's father and his own; he went on talking about his father, gradually warming to a kind of resentful defence. The father had become very like Paul's father in the end—vindictive and suffering from a sense of inferiority. Why did he hate Sudermann's portrayal so much? Because he loved his father? Or because he had subconsciously passed the same judgment on him that Sudermann passes on Paul's father and resented being made aware of it? Or possibly because he was conscious of his own resemblance to his father? At any rate, a detached judgment on the book's merits could scarcely be expected from him. He was studying to be a librarian and would, no doubt, often be asked to give advice to readers. Yet he disliked having the personal and psychological factors in criticism insisted upon; he wanted a few firmly fixed standards. His confusion about himself and *Dame Care* is in interesting contrast with the clarity of a Chinese student, who preferred it above all others in a reading-list, chiefly because it supported his own inherited conception of life: "It has a theme, and that theme is that extreme sacrifice is necessary in order to attain any great object. It has much the same theme that most of our Chinese novels have. The Chinese novel is predominantly ethical in tone. The hero is always made to undergo all kinds of hardships and sometimes death to attain his object. That object might be the salvation of other persons, the betterment of society, the rescuing of one's family, or the elevation of one's nation. *Dame Care* develops its theme adequately, since every scene contains some misfortune for the hero."

II

The discussion so far has suggested some of the very personal considerations that must be recognized and dealt with, before the neat categories of criticism can be used—or discarded—with intelligence. But there are questions concerning the effects of fiction on the reader that are still more important for the growth of any sound theories of criticism. Is fiction escape or solution, adventure or experience, for the reader?

The escapes furnished by fiction from certain moods and situations are often obvious enough. The young woman of cheerful temperament adores the more melancholy of Chekhov's stories, because it is so "refreshing" to experience a gloomy mood. The only daughter of elderly parents, in her longing for a brother or sister and "intimate family incidents" almost wore

the covers off the Alcott books, and later delighted in *Pride and Prejudice*, becoming "absorbed in the family problems of Mrs. Bennett." But it won't do to offer family chronicles to all only children. For here is another only child—and only grandchild, with "five maiden aunts and uncles"—who always felt the Alcott families too prolific: "their sharing of experiences didn't appeal to me, who knew at all times the joy of the limelight. All large families in my childhood's list of fiction excited the sympathy that made me grateful I was not like one of these." The feeling has persisted in her adult life and she is bored with family histories, like Mann's *Buddenbrooks*. Another reader recognized, as she looked back, that she had always read to escape the thing at hand, whatever it was; that she had been an adept at camouflaging her own dreary feelings with the local color of another's painting, and had thus avoided an analysis that might have led to a less boring environment. Years of illness had made her feel neglected and misunderstood, and she liked to read of characters who suffered and were not appreciated, but through keen intelligence finally won out. The fairy-tale of the Ugly Duckling—only slightly disguised in much grown-up fiction—is the archetype of innumerable novels that solace the ugly ducklings of life.

A college boy reads and re-reads *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Peter Pan*, and tales by Lord Dunsany; he thinks the ideal world would be peopled with children, that the greatest tragedy is that children grow up, and the next greatest that they want to grow up. "As for me, I shall never grow up." His favorite fiction either idealizes the child or creates a fairy-tale world, of beauty or horror; for he likes horrible tales, too, like *The Seven Who Were Hanged*, tales so far beyond the limits of his own life that he doesn't have to believe in them, not really, any more than a child believes in witches.

To one young man *The Return of the Native* afforded the most complete escape. It revived the impressions of fairy stories read in childhood: "Those in particular which were brought back to me were of the giant who locked all the men he caught in the tower of the castle, or of Jack who had just time enough to get to the bottom of the beanstalk and chop it down before his colossal pursuer arrived. In many places in Hardy's book I felt in the same position as in those nightmares where, try as one may, one is neither able to move forward or to call to one's friends, who are disappearing over the crest of the hill. In the stories and dreams just mentioned one was convinced of the inevitability of certain forces more powerful than one's self; and it was in the return to that sort of fatalism which was so terrifying in one's youth that I found satisfaction and inspiration. It was an escape from the theories of self-sufficient adulthood to the superstitious religions and fears of the old world. His use of coincidences is to some readers a fault, but for me, they make the tragedy more poignant and make me live all the more vitally in the land of dreams and illusions."

A slightly different form of escape is noted in another student's comment on Hardy. She found in his fatalism the beginning of her release from the Catholic fatalism in which she had been taught to believe and which she had

come increasingly to dread. "Disaster overtakes Hardy's characters as a matter of course; the world of itself is unfriendly to them. But the machinery that dooms them is impersonal. In Catholic fatalism, a personal God punishes His subjects through His magic. Hardy's kind of fatalism seems as relentless in its movements as the Catholic sort, but far broader and more comfortable to accept."

The fiction of failure may be as satisfying an escape as that of success. Successful people take pleasure in vicariously living through a few failures. Or people who have felt the sting of defeat but in some drab, dish-washing, adding-machine atmosphere, can derive delight from really splendid failures—spectacular ones like Ivan Karamazov's, exquisite ones like Strether's in *The Ambassadors*, romantic ones like Decoud's in *Nostromo*. The dream of a splendid failure might be consoling and congenial in moods when one of blatant success would only disgust.

III

To justify oneself is more permanently satisfactory than merely to escape into an imaginary self and more congenial surroundings. Intentionally or not, readers reveal how this or that novel has made their own actions seem reasonable or inevitable, their own temperaments interesting or excusable; it has made it more possible or more delightful for them to live with themselves. Perhaps it has justified vicious attitudes as well as fine ones and confirmed unpleasant traits as well as admirable ones, though naturally the material readers offer for inspection only inadvertently discloses this reverse side.

A young man who was forced to study medicine, hated it, and abandoned it, read *The Way of All Flesh* and saw his problem in Ernest's, and his justification in Ernest's behavior. Ernest found the Church full of hypocrites—he found the medical world the same. Philip, in *Of Human Bondage*, is one of the most consoling of heroes; he makes so many false starts, suffers so frequently what the world calls failure. Yet his failures all appear to the intimate view justified and valuable. What, asks Philip's uncle, had he got from the years devoted to that art of painting he was now abandoning for medicine? And Philip, with his ironically superior air, makes precisely the response we wish we could always summon when similarly challenged. "Philip," writes a young man, "lives for me because our experiences and thoughts parallel in many instances. His ceaseless and fruitless groping for his niche in life and a satisfactory career leads him into several experiments I have already attempted. I have left college because I believed it would not lead me to any adequate occupation in after life; I have studied art in Paris and discovered my mistake; I have played with the idea of an infinite number of careers and found that my enthusiasm did not survive the realization stage, but exhausted itself in planning and expectation; just as Philip's did about going into the Church. The fact that Philip survived so many failures and finally discovered a path of comparative contentment makes me a little less hopeless on my own account."

Proportionate to our satisfaction in the book that vindicates us is our violent and often obscure resentment of the book that topples over some carefully built-up structure in which we are living comfortably. *Of Human Bondage*—which provides so many readers with satisfying emotional escapes and justifications—made one reader suffer “mentally and physically.” “It sickened and angered and ate into me with its red petticoat, dirty smock, crooked teeth, corn-y toes and what-not. The Philips and Miss Prices became unending nightmares. I hate ugliness. It is possible for me to accept it. Without at all understanding it, I am able to sympathize with it. But I refuse to take it to me, to make it part of my life. I have the grained-in English respect for wholesomeness and human dignity. Maugham not only destroyed my illusions regarding the world but gnawed at some of the illusions I had regarding myself. I found myself revaluing almost everything I had previously read. I have never reached a final decision. I am able to see the nobility which grows out of bondage, of human suffering. In that light, I cannot be noble; I have been so utterly free, I can hardly say I have suffered—at least not sufficiently. But must I go looking for suffering? There is so much joy in the world. And I do not believe that a knowledge of the meagreness of life heightens one’s appreciation of its goodness. For my own part, I cannot say that I have known a fuller ecstasy of being since I became aware of life’s sordidness, than I knew when I raced with my dogs.” There was a Social Service worker who had great enthusiasm for her vocation. She was about to marry an engineer whose work was in a coal-mining town where there were plenty of poor people on whom she could try out, as she put it, all the pet theories she had paid for at college. She traced some of her social-service enthusiasm to her early reading of *Pollyanna* books and *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch* and *The Recreation of Brian Kent* (by Harold Bell Wright), and other books that dealt with broken-down lives, prostitution, desertion, and poor orphans. Now she herself was going to work with Cabbage Patch people. Her favorite fiction in the course she was taking dealt with situations and people that needed the services of a social-service diagnostician: novels by Galsworthy, Hardy, George Eliot. “I love to diagnose in fiction, from any chapter 3 on.” But when the Russian novelists came on the scene, she had a severe shock. She felt hatred and contempt for all the characters in *The Brothers Karamazov*; she loathed Gorky; she shuddered at the very mention of murder, insanity, radical, gendarme. She was able to endure *War and Peace* by regarding it as a sociological treatise against war. Now one would have thought that some of the people in these Russian novels so needed the help of a social service expert that she would have responded with alacrity. Probably the trouble was this: she felt equal to a Galsworthy or a Hardy problem, with the equipment of her theories; but Dostoevsky was so much more searching and profound that she felt unable to cope with his situations and his characters, and sought to defend herself by hating them.

IV

There are some glimpses of the interaction between fiction and living in the experiences we have been dealing with. But they have not been those of the actively experimental readers who are likely to try out a suggestion furnished by a novel just as they would other suggestions that come to them. Such readers were not content as children to lose themselves in the delightful dream. If they have been reading *The Arabian Nights*, they prowled about the neighborhood looking for a magic door; and finding a large round stone in the ground, with an iron ring, they lifted it up, thrilled at the glimpse of a mysterious cave, started to explore it, and had to be rescued from a fall into a disused well. A young man remembers vividly how Edward Stratemeyer's Dave Porter books inspired him to imitation. "When Dave's eyes flashed fire, I used to stand in front of the mirror to see whether I could discover any scintillations. In one of Dave's fights with the school bully, our hero banged the bully's head against the boat-house and made him see stars. I tried this at school one day, banging a fellow's head against the blackboard, but neither the victim, the teacher, nor my parents seemed to approve." He became an ardent Yale rooter, because of Frank Merriwell and Dink Stover; but never risked any money on football games—"not that I had the slightest fear of losing, for I had read so often of what a glorious thing it was to be a good loser; but because neither Stover nor Merriwell nor Dave ever gambled or smoked or drank. Nor did I—then." Inspired to swimming feats by one hero, he built himself up from a delicate boy into a record-breaker. *Black Beauty* made him a lover of horses and Uncle Tom a liker of negroes.

Another young man gave an account of the effect upon him of boys' stories and college tales that is very similar, but the ending is strikingly different. Realizing how suggestible he was, he refrained from exposing himself to "suggestive" novels, fearing they might make him do "something wild," and that would be regrettable, since he was most satisfactorily engaged to a fine girl. Probably the thought of his potential wildness was as satisfying an imaginative experience as any novel would be. Few readers can recall as definite a history of imitation as these young men. The more usual experience is one of perpetual interaction between literature and life; literature now giving some impulse to living, again an actual experience leading us to literature for interpretation or justification. The interplay appears in all possible combinations and the whole process is obscure and difficult to trace as we look back upon it. Yet the moralist and the censor would like to sum it all up in the simple question: will people act upon the suggestions of fiction? And they often risk an affirmative answer, relying on a few instances that furnish no basis for generalization, and on some convenient rough-and-ready psychological theory.

Most of the purposes served by novels in the lives of readers are suggested in these personal analyses: their value as a statement of our own confusedly realized experience; as a dream of what we should like to be—and may

possibly be encouraged to become; as an outlet for moods; as an excuse for self-pity, a device for evasion, an instrument for the clarification of conflicts and problems.

v

And the conclusion of this search for values? No dogmatic conclusion about critical standards has been reached. The purpose of this chapter is to encourage a distrust of arbitrary dogmas in criticism. It is only when a reader—and the reader may be even a “classicist” or an “impressionist” critic—has discovered his own intimate and personal responses to a book, has seen how his hitherto hidden prejudices have been treacherously at work, and has stripped himself of self-deceptions, that he is in a position to make intelligent, rather than emotionally twisted, evaluations of his reading experiences.

THE EMOTIONAL DISCOVERY OF AMERICA¹

by Stuart Pratt Sherman

IT was originally suggested to me that I should speak in this series of lectures on the discoverers and explorers of America. This is a subject of perennial fascination. I was deterred from treating it by only two considerations, of which the first was this: I knew nothing about it. Perhaps I should not have allowed that fact to deter me. Whether my modesty in the matter was excessive I will submit to your better judgments by reciting now at once all the important points that I remember about the first discoverers and explorers of this country. They are these:

(1) The Italians, Portuguese, and Spaniards showed far more initiative and enterprise in discovery than the so-called Anglo-Saxons. America was discovered by foreign immigrants and settled by the English. That established a beautiful thing which Academicians love to talk about. It established a tradition: the foreigners are still discovering America; the so-called Anglo-Saxons are still trying to settle it.

(2) The best age for discovery is when one has grown tired of old worlds and old things, somewhere between forty and fifty. Columbus was forty-one when he found the new world. John Cabot was forty-seven when he discovered the mainland.

(3) Captains and crews of exploring vessels are largely recruited from the ranks of criminals and desperate and broken men, who mutiny, and discover things which they haven't been licensed to discover, and make trouble for

¹ From S. P. Sherman, *The Emotional Discovery of America*. By permission of Farrar and Rinehart.

their sovereigns, and sometimes languish in irons, like Columbus, or end their days on the scaffold, like Raleigh.

(4) A discoverer sets out at his own risk and sometimes at his own charge; and if he is successful, he may receive, like John Cabot, exactly the same reward for discovering a new world that Milton received for writing "Paradise Lost": £10.

(5) It is practically impossible to discover a new world without leaving the old one.

(6) The sixth and last point that I remember is the function of kings, courts, potentates, royal societies, royal geographical commissions, and the like, with reference to discoverers. As a matter of fact, these powers have in history two distinct functions.

Their first function is to inspect the plans of the intending discoverer, and to pronounce them absurd, vain, and impracticable. Their second function is to confirm the discoveries after they have been made and to appropriate a percentage of the profits.

Over and above my manifest ignorance of the early explorers and discoverers, I was deterred from treating them by a second consideration which I am afraid is not very creditable. But the fact is that I am rather tired of celebrating the physical discovery and settlement of America—the landings at San Salvador, Cape Breton Island, Jamestown, and Plymouth Rock. The landing was made. It is too late to do anything about it. Whether it was a wise thing to land is a question which it has long since been idle to discuss, though some of our English friends—and, indeed, some of our own countrymen—are still discussing it. At any rate, the secret is out. Physical America has been discovered and explored and can't be concealed from the world. There is no danger of its being lost. Why should anyone labor any longer to commemorate its discovery?

I am convinced that all kinds of academic institutions are somewhat excessively addicted to acts of commemoration and antiquarian research. For the greater part of my active life I have been an antiquarian and a commemorator. The universities, though on the side of graduate research they are supposed to face the future, and to be advancing on chaos and the dark, are still filled with people who collect candle-snuffers which snuff no candles and footwarmers which warm no feet. And that is probably why so many bright and promising boys acquire cold feet in the processes of higher education.

It is popularly understood that universities exist as custodians of the past, to conserve it and to transmit it to posterity. Now posterity, as a matter of fact, is doing its best to get the junk of the past to the bonfire. It is rather generally conceived also that literary academies and institutes have their reason for existence in a similar conservative function. Knowing that I was to speak today as a member of the National Institute of Arts and Letters, I studied its constitution in order to learn whether I was under any corporate obligation to speak as an antiquarian and a commemorator. Somewhat to my surprise and satisfaction I ascertained that the National Institute avows no

addiction to historical retrospect. It was organized not for the recollection but for the advancement of literature by the recognition and reward of original creation.

There is a rite much talked about at college commencements and on other solemn occasions, called handing on the torch. It is derived, as you know, from the ancient torch-race, in which the spent runner passes his fire to a fresh athlete, who seizing it in turn, carries it forward for another stage. By a beautiful symbolism, the term is transferred to the transmission of skill and wisdom and inspiration from one generation to the next. When this business is in the hands of true athletes, I think there can be no doubt that living fire does pass from one generation to the next, and is borne on over new paths. But having studied for many years in academic places what is called the torch-race, or the transmission of the great tradition, I have observed that this semi-priestly function has a certain tendency to fall into the hands of antiquarians; and when this happens, what is transmitted is not the flaming torch but the cold candelabrum, which is rather an impediment than an inspiration to the runner.

For such students of letters as are interested rather in the torch than in the candelabrum it occurred to me that one might find a more suggestive theme than the landings of the old navigators in the *emotional* discovery of America. Until it is emotionally discovered it remains a barren and rather repugnant land to letters. Certain young men imagine that this process was not even begun till about 1900; but that is a mistake. The special appeal of this theme is that the emotional discovery of America has been going on for a very long time, that it is still going on, and that it will go on after we are all dead and forgotten, with just as much zest as it had a hundred years ago or thirty years ago, and with just as much room for discovery as it offered thirty years ago or as it offers today.

For there is this fact to be kept in mind that America as a discovery of the heart and the imagination, and therefore as a subject for letters, is as fluent as water, as evanescent as smoke. She hangs like a mirage in the mist and light of our hopes and fears and affections. She is created, as Mr. De la Mare says of all things which are precious, "out of our love and power"; and when our love and power wane, she wanes; and when they wax, she waxes. On the whole, as it seems to me, we have been, so far as literary expression is concerned, a singularly unemotional and unaffectionate people, with plenty of power but with scant love. Perhaps no other country so beautiful and so various has remained so long in the intellectual consciousness of her people and received so few words of choice and delicate appreciation, so few tokens of enamored adoration.

She was recognized under many other aspects before many people had any heart-filling sense that she was beautiful. For the Spanish explorers, she was El Dorado, rich in gold, jewels, and spices. She was Christ's Kingdom for the Pilgrims. For the Adamses, for Washington, she was Republican Rome restored, and stocked with Plutarchan heroes. For English and French

Revolutionists at the end of the eighteenth century, she was Utopia, Arcady, and the Garden of Eden. For one chorus she was the land of the free and the home of the brave. For another, she was the land of slaves and yokels and Babbitts. As an emotional fact she doesn't "stay put": she is constantly being discovered and lost again; and our history is the enemy of all our thin and dwindled traditions about her.

Doubtless this emotional discovery began when Leif Ericsson beached his boats on the shores of Labrador; but the records are wanting. It continued with Columbus, for we read that when he and his crew, men of Latin blood, came ashore on San Salvador, they all gave "thanks to God, kneeling upon the shore, and kissed the ground with tears of joy." I think all Americans should feel that way about their native soil.

To the Puritan discovery of America as an emotional fact, there were serious obstacles. They had brought with them from the old world a spiritual commonwealth of Christ, which they super-imposed upon the new land. For a long time their ministers, who were their principal men of letters, could not see New England because their hearts were fixed upon Canaan, upon Salem, and upon Zion, and were dazzled by watching the light of the gospel breaking upon the Indians, in the intervals when they were not watching the effect of their muskets upon them. In one fashion and another, the Puritan divines conceived it to be their duty to wean the affections of their flocks away from their place of exile, and fix them upon a heavenly city, singing:

"This is not my place of resting,
Mine's a city yet to come
Homeward to it I am hasting,
On to my eternal home."

Nothing so long and so effectually prevented the emotional exploration and settlement of the new land as this habit of teaching generation after generation to regard it as a kind of asylum and quarantine for souls until they should be passed beyond the river into a better land.

The English and the Dutch colonists began, as we say, to "warm up" to the land, to develop an affectionate relationship with it, to take it into their hearts only as they discovered here and there that the fishing was excellent, the game abundant, and the climate salubrious. If you look through the colonial writers for emotional discoveries outside the field of religion, you find the occasion of their emotions almost pathetically utilitarian.

Take, for example, Francis Higginson, writing of New England's Plantation in 1630: what makes his heart beat faster is the admirable fertility of the soil and the abundance of sea-fish, which "are almost beyond believing; and sure I should scarce have believed it except I had seen it with my own eyes. I saw great stores of whales, and grampuses, and such abundance of mackerels that it would astonish one to behold; likewise cod fish. . . . There is a fish called a bass, a most sweet and wholesome fish as ever I did eat. . . . And besides bass, we take plenty of scates and thornback, and abun-

dance of lobsters, and the least boy in the Plantation may both catch and eat what he will of them. For my own part, I was soon cloyed with them, they were so great and fat and luscious." There is a kind of palatal emotion here which, if Francis Higginson allows it to run riot, may work havoc with his other-worldliness.

The Rev. Mr. Higginson glows, too, at thought of the freedom from stomach trouble which he enjoys in New England. Whereas in the old country his stomach was so delicate that he could drink nothing but strong and stale ale, "now," he declares, "I *can* and oftentimes do drink New England water very well." Perhaps he reaches the peak of his emotion when he says "a cup of New England's air is better than a whole draught of New England's ale."

Turning to Daniel Denton's "Description of New York" in 1670, I find that he likewise is an enthusiast about the whales and grampuses which in the winter lie upon the south side of Long Island and about the tobacco, hemp, flax, pumpkins, melons, etc., which the island yields. And already, at this early date, one can mark a difference between a New Yorker and a New Englander. Denton has begun to enjoy his life, while Higginson has hardly got beyond enjoying his freedom from stomach trouble. He notes that in New York one can have all the land one wants rent free,—a beautiful old tradition which I find has lapsed. He enjoys the annual horse-races for a silver cup in the middle of the island. He is even infatuated with the red-bird and with "divers sorts of singing birds, whose chirping notes salute the ears of travellers with an harmonious discord; and in every pond and brook green silken frogs, who warbling forth their untuned tunes, strive to bear a part in their music." "I may say truly," he continues, "that if there be any terrestrial happiness to be had by people of all ranks, it must certainly be here. But that which adds happiness to all the rest, is the healthfulness of the place; where many people in twenty years' time never know what sickness is; where they look upon it as a great mortality if two or three die out of a town in a year's time: where, beside the sweetness of the air, the country itself sends forth such a fragrant smell that it may be perceived at sea before they can make the land. . . . What shall I say more?"

I will take one other colonial record, from George Alsop's "Character of the Province of Maryland," 1666. Writing to his father in a rather frolicsome mood of discovery, he declares that "this country of Maryland abounds in a flourishing variety of delightful woods, pleasant groves, lovely springs, together with spacious navigable rivers and creeks, it being a most healthful and pleasant situation.

"Herds of deer are as numerous in this Province of Mary-Land as cuckolds can be in London, only their horns are not so well dressed and tipped with silver as their's are.

"Here if the devil had such a vagary in his head as he once had among the Gadarians, he might drown a thousand head of hogs and they'd ne're be missed, for the very woods of this Province swarms with them."

All these men, from Francis Higginson in Salem to George Alsop in Maryland, had something of the emotional discoverer in them. They were developing and enjoying personal relations with the land. They were making themselves over, they were enjoying a new birth, in the womb of new circumstances. They all show at least a presentiment that the spirit of life is passing from the old world to the new; and they salute the borders of the unknown with a cheer.

In the next hundred years the progress made toward the discovery of America was of course enormous; but if I may venture on a generalization, the discoveries of the eighteenth century were not of the personal and emotional quality which drives directly at artistic expression. The characteristic discoveries of the age were physical, scientific, philosophical, political, critical.

In other words, eighteenth century America, like eighteenth century France and eighteenth century Germany, was an age of reason, an age of enlightenment. During the eighteenth century the best brains in Western Europe walked boldly out of the twilight of the Middle Ages into modern times; and the best brains in America walked out with them, leaving the New Canaanites, the New Salemites, and the New Zionites asleep in the villages among the New England hills, dreaming in their little white churches, under the bonnets of their little white old maids, the fading paradisiacal dream, implanted there by the exiled ministers of colonial times who had taught them to sing:

"This is not my place of resting,
Mine's a city yet to come."

Meanwhile, the discovery of America was being pushed forward, as always, by the discoverers, the explorers, the secessionists, who had walked out of the old church, out of the old state, out of the old phantasms and dreams. It was being pushed forward by the deists and the unitarians and the unclassified free-thinkers, by the democrats and the republicans and the dreamers of an international commonwealth of mankind—men begotten by their times to face the need of their times, to curb pestilence, to harness thunderbolts, to unseat tyrants, to build the strong frame of a State. In the works of the witch-finder Cotton Mather, now turned rationalist and vaccinator for small-pox, in the works of Franklin, and Paine, and Jefferson, and Hamilton, and the Adamses, and not in the hymn books or the sermons, you learn who discovered America in the eighteenth century. It was an intellectual not an emotional discovery.

There was one man living among those famous wits who might have made a great emotional discovery of America in the eighteenth century if his passionate intensity of feeling had been put in service to the main movement of intellectual life in his times. As it was, he writhed in the rusting chains of Calvinistic theology, and perished there. Only from time to time, hardly knowing what ailed him, hardly guessing that he was dying of spiritual starvation, he left his church and his parish, and retired, as he says, "into a soli-

tary place on the banks of Hudson's river, at some distance from the city, for contemplation on divine things."

Poor man! Perhaps he went out to the banks of Hudson's river intending to consider "how doleful is the state of the damned, especially such as go to Hell from under the Gospel." But as a matter of fact, the spirit of the scene took hold of him, and he tells us in some pages which, after nearly two hundred years, are still hot with his emotion, still wet with his tears, that what he actually meditated on was the sun, the moon and the stars, the clouds, the blue sky, the grass, the flowers, and all nature. And looking on these things, unaccountably he felt an "inward sweetness." "The appearance of everything was altered. There seemed to be, as it were, a calm, sweet cast, or appearance of divine glory, in almost everything." On one occasion, in 1737, this divine glory on the face of nature by the banks of Hudson's river lasted near an hour, and kept him for the greater part of the time "in a flood of tears and weeping aloud." Poor Jonathan Edwards! He had discovered America, the sweet body of his country, as a fact for emotional response. But he knew it not. He thought that what he had seen was one of the bearded rabbis such as gaze down upon the people from Sargent's dreadful satire on the Trinity in the Boston Public Library; and so he went back to the city, clanking his Calvinistic chains, and told the happy horse-racing New Yorkers once more how doleful is the state of the damned, especially such as go to hell from under the gospel.

The emotional discovery of Hudson's river and valley had to wait for Irving—an infinitely milder-souled man than Edwards, a man whose poetry was always emotion recollected in a gently humorous tranquillity. For a long time now, criticism, outside the schools, has lapsed into silence about Irving, from a suspicion, I suppose, that he is not quite in the genuine American tradition, but is rather a whimsical eighteenth century Englishman good-naturedly humoring us by painting the likeness of George Washington over the head of George III on the old taverns which for him have never changed their sovereignty. Irving was not a very resolute secessionist nor a very aggressive discoverer; but Irving did a very precious and magical thing: he loved New York and the Hudson Valley and he took them into his heart, the old Dutch town and the river, and he recreated them for the imagination, and fixed them there in a mellow atmosphere of their own, like a golden city under the sea, mingling its tender glamour forever with the light of our common day.

To take any part of the earth into your heart transfigures it for you and for all men whom you can persuade to use your eyes. And the transfiguring discovery of America has, in most periods, proceeded bit by bit, in the hearts of men like Cooper who took the forest into his heart, and Dana and Melville who took the sea into their hearts, and Hawthorne who declared that New England was as large a lump of the earth as his heart could hold, and Bret Harte who embraced the red-shirted forty-niners, and Mark Twain who took the Mississippi into his heart, and Joaquin Miller who embraced the

Sierras, and G. W. Cable and Joel Chandler Harris who transfigured Georgia and New Orleans by discovering them as facts for the heart and the imagination.

In my judgment it is hardly possible to over-value the enamored localism, the enamored provincialism, of men like Harris, Cable, Mark Twain, Miller, and the rest who have loved new lands for the first time, and have made the first poetry out of a life hitherto esteemed vulgar. And just a word in this connection about the torch-race. Who carried on the torch of Washington Irving? Who received the fire of his heart and his imagination? Well, there can be no doubt that Irving's candlesticks are best preserved by the English teachers who try to convert the racy colloquial idiom of little Yankee boys into Addisonian English; but the man who carries forward the torch of Irving is the man who continues his magical task of clothing "home scenes and places and familiar names with those imaginative and whimsical associations so seldom met with in our new country, but which live like charms and spells about the cities of the Old World, binding the heart of the native inhabitant to his home." From this point of view, Joel Chandler Harris, working with the lore of the Georgia plantations, is more truly a continuator of Irving than any professor of Addisonian rhetoric who ever lived.

But I wish to call your attention now to the group of adventurers whom I rank with Columbus, Cabot and Magellan in the field of emotional discovery. These three men that I am going to mention flourished between 1840 and 1855. They were all dangerous characters, for they were all genuine torch-bearers, and some of their contemporaries thought them genuine fire-brands. They were tired of the old worlds, junk and antiquities, old candlesticks, old footwarmers, the dust that gathers on disused furniture, "foulness preserved in cassia and pitch, and swathed in linen; the death of that which never lived."

The impulse to spiritual secession and discovery was strong among them. They turned their backs squarely upon New Canaan, New Salem and Zion; for they believed that the worst foes of discovery, the chief repressors of the new life, are those who cling with feeble antiquarian hands to the hollow forms of old faith, cling not hard enough to raise the dead to a fresh resurrection—cling just tenaciously enough to prevent the full forward rush and flow of faith into new forms. These three walked out of the church, they walked out of the frigid intellectualism of contemporary unitarian culture, they walked out of the academic orthodoxy of Harvard college, they walked out of the political state, they walked out of drawing-room society—they walked out into nature and the use of all their senses. And they discovered America as a major heartbeat of humanity in the frame of the universe. And in the intense emotion of that experience, one of them spoke and said:

"In eternity there is indeed something true and sublime. But all these times and places and occasions are here and now. God himself culminates in the present moment, and will *never* be more divine in the lapse of the ages."

And another said:

"I have heard what the talkers were talking, the talk of the beginning and the end;
But I do not talk of the beginning or the end.
There was never any more inception than there is now;
Nor any more youth or age than there is now;
And will never be any more perfection than there is now;
Nor any more heaven or hell than there is now."

And the first speaker said: "Certainly, we do not need to be soothed and entertained always like children. . . . The front aspect of great thoughts can only be enjoyed by those who stand on the side whence they arise. Books, not which afford us a cowering enjoyment, but in which each thought is of unusual daring; such as an idle man cannot read, and a timid one would not be entertained by, which even make us dangerous to existing institutions,—such call I good books. A book should contain pure discoveries, glimpses of *terra firma*, though by shipwrecked mariners, and not the art of navigation by those who have never been out of sight of land."

And the third said: "Nature as we know her is no saint. . . . She comes eating and drinking and sinning. Her darlings, the great, the strong, and the beautiful, are not children of our law, do not come out of the Sunday School, nor weigh their food, nor punctually keep the commandments. If we will be strong with her strength, we must not harbor such desolate consciences, borrowed too from consciences of other natures. We must set up the strong present tense against all the rumors of wrath to come."

And the first exclaimed: "Goodness!—you hypocrite, come out of that, live your life, do your work, then take your hat. . . . Most people with whom I talk, men and women of some originality and genius, have their scheme of the universe all cut and dried; . . . an ancient and tottering frame with all its boards blown off. . . . The wisest man preaches no doctrines; he has no scheme; he sees no rafter, not even a cobweb against the heavens. It is clear sky. . . . The church is a sort of hospital for men's souls, and as full of quackery as the hospital for their bodies. Those who are taken into it live like pensioners in their Retreat or Sailor's Snug Harbor, where you may see a row of religious cripples sitting outside in sunny weather. . . . One is sick at heart of this pogoda worship. . . . It is as the sound of many catechisms and religious books, twanging a canting peal round the earth, seeming to issue from some Egyptian temple and echo along the shore of the Nile, right opposite to Pharaoh's palace and Moses in the bulrushes, startling a multitude of sharks and alligators basking in the pool."

This man who has just been speaking said on another occasion that he knew of no redeeming qualities in himself except a "sincere love for some things" especially, "a singular yearning for all wildness." He trusted his senses and loved their experience of all sorts. He liked the sacramental contact of earth under his bare feet. On one occasion he ate a rat. He was also fond of wild grapes, and was a collector of Indian arrowheads. He fancied, he said, that "it would be a luxury to stand up to one's chin in some retired

swamp a whole summer day, scenting the wild honeysuckle and bilberry blows, and lulled by the minstrelsy of gnats and mosquitoes." "Let us not," he said, "let us not, my friends, be wheedled and cheated into good behavior to earn the salt of our eternal porridge, whoever they are that attempt it."

The third man exclaims, in exactly the same vein, with the same hunger for experience through the senses:

"Too long shut in strait and few,
Thinly dieted on dew,
I will use the world, and sift it,
As you spin a cherry.
O doleful ghosts, and goblins merry!
O all you virtues, methods, mights,
Means, appliances, delights,
Reputed wrongs and braggart rights,
Smug routine, and things allowed,
Minorities, things under cloud!—
Hither! take me, use me, fill me,
Vein and artery, though ye kill me."

And the second man, intoxicated by a vintage that ne'er grew in the belly of the grape, intoxicated with a passion of discovery, intoxicated with a passion of love, goes abroad and picks up America, bit by bit, from sea to sea, and declares for each morsel of it his unmitigated adoration. It was the most cryingly needed service ever rendered to America by a man of letters. The emotional discovery of America? What does that mean? It means that you recognize your eternity culminating here and now. It means that now at this hour you enter into sacramental relations with the universe of which the center is under your feet. It means that you recognize with a response which shatters your being with emotion that no priest or church can longer prevent you from eating the bread and drinking the wine of mystical communion with your God and your fellowmen.

"Why, who makes much of a miracle?

As to me, I know of nothing else but miracles,
Whether I walk the streets of Manhattan,
Or dart my sight over the roofs of houses toward the sky,
Or wade with naked feet along the beach, just in the edge of the water,
Or stand under the trees in the woods,
Or talk by day with anyone I love—or sleep in the bed at night with anyone I love,
Or sit at table at dinner with my mother,
Or look at strangers opposite me riding in the car,
Or watch honey-bees busy around the hive, of a summer forenoon,
Or animals feeding in the fields,
Or birds—or the wonderfulness of insects in the air,
Or the wonderfulness of the sun-down—or of stars shining so quiet and bright,
Or the exquisite, delicate thin curve of the new moon in spring,
Or whether I go among those I like best, and that like me best. . . .
What stranger miracles are there?"

The three radical and rebellious conspirators for the advancement of American letters whose words I have just been quoting are, as you have doubt-

less recognized, Thoreau, Emerson, and Whitman. I think no one has yet adequately demonstrated the essential unanimity of theory, of feeling, of purpose, and of courage which underlies the revolt and the constructive program of this bold trio of individualists. So far as their ideas are concerned, there is just as much dynamite in Thoreau and in Emerson as in Whitman; I doubt, indeed, whether he had an idea which one of them had not shaped before him. For example, Thoreau and Emerson recognize as clearly as Whitman the necessity of bringing a full-bodied humanity, with all the senses functioning, into the service of the new literature of the new world for which they are "striking up."

Whitman's priceless addition to the power of the movement in which he participated is due to the exuberant richness and fecundative ardor of his emotional nature—to a gusto, a discovering wonder, a freshness of love and joy absolutely unprecedented in American literature and hitherto unequaled. What other people observed, he experienced. In him the miracle of transubstantiation was daily accomplished; and he and the solid universe became one spirit in a mystical and transfiguring communion. He becomes the thing he sings. Precisely because he possesses this gift of full and joyous emotional realization in a national scene singularly destitute of it, Whitman has become unique as a torch-bearer, a fire-bringer.

Fire is a dangerous thing to handle; and many good people feel more at their ease with a fire extinguisher.

But the advancement of letters, on the whole, is not a vocation for men who insist on being at their ease. None of this group promises ease. They are always provoking men to a kind of celestial arson. When you touch Whitman, you have a better chance than at any other point in our poetical procession of receiving a torch and not a cold candlestick.

I have said much, too much, about the history of emotional discovery. What really interests me is the deduction from history of the principles which govern this discovery from age to age. So far as I can make out, these principles are at bottom just the same today as they were in 1840 or in 1855.

The advancement of letters does not wait for gentlemen or scholars or societies of gentlemen and scholars or for good Republicans or good Presbyterians or for native Americans whose ancestors landed in the seventeenth century. Literature betrays a profound social unconcern about the sort of people she carries in her crew, provided only they are adept in hoisting sails and making a landing on terra incognita through a roaring surf. If you wish to advance letters in any signal degree, you will have to run some risk of getting your feet wet. You will have to renounce the antiquarian mind. You will have to accept the society of your contemporaries, for better, for worse, as your portion; and if you wish to have the utmost joy of it, you had better tell yourself that eternity culminates in the present hour and will never be more divine in the lapse of ages. There is nothing worth while but reality, whatever it is. You must say to yourself, "Reality though it slay me." You must write out of the reality of your own experience, telling your truth as

the spirit of your own time and the light in your own mind give you to see the truth, though it horrify all the virgins, married and unmarried, in Christendom, and leave you in limbo for the term of your natural life.

It is quite possible, too, that when you have taken the hazard of new fortunes, and have left your old world, and sailed into uncharted seas, you may discover nothing that will place your name among the great navigators. Well, that is your risk. It is always safer to stay at home and hear what Livingstone and Stanley and Franklin and Shackleton have seen when they return, if they do return.

The advancement of letters is not a vocation to be recommended to the average man any more than dietetic chemistry, psycho-pathology, or experimental medicine are to be recommended to the average man: the ultimate purpose of all these sciences, we may conceive to be the multiplication of sound minds in sound bodies, but their practitioners are daily engaged with excrements, and strange forms of madness, and with the germs of devastating disease to which they not seldom succumb. That is the risk which they pay for the chance of discovery.

Literature's pioneers must always be advancing beyond the old hunters' trails and fires into the dark forest of human experience. If safety isn't your first consideration, then you will pass on to a closer and closer scrutiny of your own sensations and passions and ideas and a sharper observation of your fellows, reporting what you find with a ruthless veracity, steadily substituting a fact which you have felt in all your senses for a vague word which you have heard in polite society. If you do that, you are likely to find that you are carrying a lighted torch.

The age in which we now live appears to me to be a great and fascinating period in the emotional and literary discovery of America, because the woods are full of lighted torches, are full of men and women bent on exploring and reporting the truth as they see it, and nothing but the truth, and great areas of repressed truth about their own lives and about the lives of the American people. One feels the quickening breath of this spirit in many places: in history, in biography, in criticism, in poetry, in our so-called fiction, which becomes more and more a peculiarly intimate and veracious form of contemporary history.

The America which we are now discovering is something of a shock to a good many people; but I think they will recover from it. Prudent persons may not like the present generation of explorers, their vocabulary, or their manners or their criticism of life; but then the chances are that they wouldn't have cared very much for the crews who sailed with Columbus or with Magellan. It would even be possible, I suppose, to put forth with applause in some quarters, an argument to the effect that the literary discovery of America had gone far enough in 1870; and that the duty of all good men at the present hour is to sustain the *status quo*. Happily that is not our duty here. Happily our purpose here is fulfilled and our pleasure is keenest when we are recognizing and applauding the various aspects of the great literary

movement which is taking place under our eyes, giving us on the whole, the stimulating sense that ours is one of the valorous and encouraging ages of the world.

Fifty years from now, perhaps very much sooner, I think the literary antiquarians will take up one of the books published this fall, Mr. Sherwood Anderson's "Story Teller's Story." And he will read the pages in which Mr. Anderson tells that he grew up in the belief that an American man in the world of men must give his soul to business. And then he will read on through the passage in which Mr. Anderson describes how one day, sitting in his office, dictating a sales letter to his stenographer, he stopped short in the middle of his sentence and said to his secretary:

"My dear young woman, it is all very silly but I have decided to no longer concern myself with this buying and selling. It may be all right for others but for me it is poison. There is the factory. You may have it if it pleases you. It is of little value I dare say. . . . Now, at this moment, with the letter I have been dictating, with the very sentence you have been writing left unfinished, I am going out of that door and never coming back. What am I going to do? Well now, that I don't know. I am going to wander about. I am going to sit with people, listen to words, tell tales of people, what they are thinking, what they are feeling. The devil! It may even be I am going forth in search of myself."

And fifty years hence, I think the literary antiquarian will point to this passage and say: "There is one of the historic moments in American literature." For many of us already the incident is beautifully symbolic and, we hope, prophetic. When the middle-aged business man begins a definitive walking out of his office to discover himself in the joy of artistic craftsmanship, something exciting is happening in our civilization. An epoch seems on the point of closing. Someone has seized a torch, and lighted new vistas.

DISCUSSIONS OF MODERN PROBLEMS

WHAT IS THE COLLEGE FOR?¹

by Max McConn

IN college catalogs the names of the students usually come last; and in many of the older books on college problems the chapter or section dealing specifically with the *student body* was similarly placed.

In the newer books, however—Mr. John Palmer Gavit's *College*, for example, and Mr. Percy Marks's *Which Way Parnassus?*—this situation is emphatically reversed. In answer to the question which stands at the head of this chapter these writers very nearly shout:

For the students!

This seems at first like a notable discovery; and in one sense it is obviously—even platitudinously—true; that is to say, the college certainly exists for the students rather than for the trustees, the president and deans, the faculty, or even the alumni. But to Mr. Gavit, Mr. Marks, and others who join in the same chorus, *the students* evidently mean the whole of the typical student body as commonly constituted at present, including, and apparently including especially, that large contingent whose ideals are so joyously—and accurately—expressed in the excellent song which runs:

We all came to college,
But we didn't come for knowledge,
So we'll raise hell while we're here.

From my old-fogy, academic point of view that answer does not get us very far. In seeking to determine the primary and fundamental purpose of the college, we must, it seems to me, go beyond even the students—whether that term be used in its present inclusive sense or with the older, narrower meaning which implied some connection with studies.

The college is an institution, and like every other institution has been established and is maintained by society to accomplish some result which in the view of the social group, or some considerable part of the group, is held to be necessary or advantageous. We must inquire what this result is which the community seeks from the college.

Perhaps I shall put my meaning across most quickly by taking some

¹ From M. McConn, *College or Kindergarten?* By permission of the *New Republic*.

analogous institution as an example. Let us choose the medical school. Does the medical school exist fundamentally for the medical students? Obviously not. The purpose of society in supporting medical schools is only incidentally to train a few favored individuals for a highly lucrative profession. The broader, primary purpose is to provide the community with an adequate, continuing supply of learned and skillful physicians. The buildings, the laboratories, the professors, *and the students* are only instrumentalities from the standpoint of this primary social objective.

In the case of the medical school this fact is patent to all; and the common sense of the community accordingly approves the extremely rigorous policy which medical faculties adopt towards their students—approves the point-blank rejection of any candidate for admission who has not demonstrated his aptitude for medical studies by marked proficiency in his pre-medical biology and chemistry; approves the prompt exclusion later of any student who exhibits either dullness or laziness; and approves putting the whole group through an extremely arduous course of training, whether they like it or not. Let me repeat: in the case of the medical school the community perceives the social purpose, and therefore recognizes that the student, no less than the professor, is only a means to the social end, and has no rights and is entitled to no privileges except those which his fitness to that end may give him.

Parallel social purposes are apparent for the other professional schools—law, theology, engineering, dentistry, pharmacy.

How is it for the college of liberal arts? Surely there must be some recognized communal need underlying an institution for which whole states tax themselves so heavily, to which men of wealth and also of approved judgment and public spirit donate so many millions. It is curious—is it not?—that it is somewhat difficult to say offhand, in the case of the arts college, just what the social purpose is. But we must find it, first of all. Until this point is clarified there is little use in talking about the students or the faculty or the alumni or athletics or fraternities or entrance requirements or curricula or anything else. On the other hand, once we have correctly defined the social purpose, everything else should follow from that as clearly as it does in the case of the professional schools.

When the Puritans of Massachusetts Bay, only six years after their landing in Boston Harbor, moved to establish at "Newtown" an institution which at first they called simply *the College*, they had a very definite community purpose, which they were able to express with sufficient clearness:

"After God had carried us safe to *New-England*, and wee had builded our houses, provided necessaries for our liveli-hood, rear'd convenient places for Gods worship, and settled the Civill Government; One of the next things we longed for, and looked after was to advance *Learning* and perpetuate it to Posterity; dreading to leave an illiterate Ministry to the Churches, when our present Ministers shall lie in the Dust." (*New England's First Fruits*, 1643.)

The maintenance of a learned "Ministry" for the Churches—if we could attain a similar singleness of purpose for the college of to-day, how quickly our problems would unravel!

The simple, concrete objective expressed in this quotation remained valid for Harvard College for perhaps two hundred years; and a similar conception and purpose motivated the establishment of the other Colonial colleges and of many less famous institutions which came to be set up later in the New West developing in the valleys of the Ohio and the Mississippi. The trustees and faculties—if not the students—of some of these obscure Middle Western Harvards could probably subscribe even now to the above formulation.

But as time went on and wealth increased and religion decayed, as American life was progressively secularized, this original purpose of the colleges has naturally faded for the most part out of view. It has become incidental everywhere and in most institutions obsolete, and other purposes have taken its place.

Unfortunately these newer purposes have never been formulated with any such definiteness and clarity as the original conception attained. We have had many formulations from individual educators, and several collective and official pronouncements from faculties, as to what the purpose, or purposes, of the present arts college *ought* to be, but very little analysis of what the objects actually are in the unexpressive mind of the community which maintains the colleges by supplying them with funds and students.

Such an analysis I am about to attempt. And since the reader may ask, very pertinently, how I am qualified to speak on this difficult point, let me say that for something over fifteen years I have held administrative positions in which it has been a part of my official duty to spend many hours each week talking with candidates for admission to college and their parents. The parents are frequently quite expansive as to their motives and desires, and some of the students scarcely less so. The following summary of the reasons which bring the young men and women of to-day to college, and the reasons (not always the same) which induce their parents to send them, is based therefore on some tens of thousands of interviews, often extended and intimate, with actual youngsters and actual parents.

Of course the motives vary greatly in detail and emphasis, and are frequently mixed; but there are three leading purposes which are clearly distinguishable and under which practically all the minor motives can be subsumed. I shall call them:

- (1) The bread-and-butter purpose;
- (2) The superkindergarten purpose; and—
- (3) The culture purpose.

(1) *The Bread-and-Butter Purpose.* I put this purpose first because it is the one of most frequent occurrence, especially in the minds of parents; perhaps also in the minds of the students themselves, though of this I am not so sure.

The vast majority of those fathers who put up anywhere from \$800 to \$2,000 a year to keep a boy or a girl at college "make this sacrifice"—I quote a phrase which I often hear from their own lips—with one definite object consciously in view; namely, that the boy shall thereby be enabled to make in the future a better livelihood, a larger salary, bigger money, than he would otherwise be likely to earn—and, it is frequently added, a better livelihood than Dad himself has been able to make; and that the girl shall become economically self-sufficient until marriage, and, if necessary, afterwards.

In other words, the social purpose of the college of to-day, as conceived by the majority of the clientele which sends students to its campus and pays fees into its treasury, is no longer to provide a ministry of any kind for the community, but rather to afford special privilege and a differential advantage in the economic struggle to those few, including themselves, who may be shrewd and thrifty and enterprising enough to seize the opportunity presented.

(2) *The Superkindergarten Purpose.* The second purpose is more difficult to designate satisfactorily and more difficult to explain. It is seldom formulated, in the parent's mind or in the student's, with anything like the clearness with which, in the former case, the bread-and-butter motive is held. It is easily distinguishable, however, in certain instances; the number of which is smaller than for the bread-and-butter motive, but nevertheless considerable, especially in the East, and at present rapidly increasing both East and West.

The parties concerned, where this purpose operates, are economically superior to the bread-and-butter motive. The boy does not have to learn a trade or profession; he will be taken, in due course, into Dad's business, or, if he does not care for that particular line, Dad will set him up in almost any other business he may eventually select. As for the girl, she will marry, and marry well. But in the meantime there they are, the boy and girl. The lower schools have graduated them and turned them out. The boy is too young as yet to be of any real use in business, and the girl too young to marry—or at least Mother thinks so. What to do with the next lap of their young lives? Why, obviously—send them to college.

Not that either the boy or the girl—in the typical case—has any strong inclination toward further studies; nor do Dad and Mother for a moment suspect them of any such idiosyncrasy. But college is such a safe and reputable place to take care of them for the next four years. They will be looked after somewhat. Not nearly as well as they should be—not as in a good preparatory school. Still there are deans and advisers and professors and sometimes preceptors or tutors, to take the place in part of the preparatory school masters. And there is athletics, to develop their bodies, and, it is asserted, their moral character. And the fraternities, which add somewhat to any one's social prestige, and lead to friendships with other eligible young people, which may be worth while in the future both socially and financially. And, of course, it will not hurt the children to have some further work in English and history and languages and the like; a little more French or German would

come in handy on the next trip abroad; they may even take courses in Investments or Corporation Finance which might conceivably be really useful. Besides, it is quite economical. Of course their allowances will have to be large; but at that they will spend less than they would playing around in New York or Philadelphia or Chicago or San Francisco—and have better associates, and be less likely to get into serious scrapes. And, finally, everybody's doing it; Jones at the Country Club is always bragging about his boy at Princeton, and Mrs. Smith disturbs every game of bridge she plays with lugged-in references to her daughter at Bryn Mawr. And it will be so nice to have the boy eligible for the University Club. College it is!

In short, the social purpose of the college, from the standpoint of this considerable and influential section of its constituency, is that of a super-kindergarten, to take care of a group of older babies, who have progressed, in their amusements, from rattles to rah-rahs.

I believe the analogy with the kindergarten to be quite accurate and complete. The kindergarten—I do not, of course, refer to any public institution, but to the reputable private kindergarten—is a place where a selected group of nice children are: (1) carefully tended, amid cheerful and esthetic surroundings; (2) kept constantly amused with healthful games of alleged educational value; and (3) given some modicum (but not too much) of actual instruction. This is exactly what the parents of these older children here in question, and the children themselves, desire to get and do get from the colleges.

(3) *The Culture Purpose.* There is, finally, a small group of parents—in my fifteen years I have not met many of them, but occasionally one encounters a specimen—who have carried over from some earlier tradition a notion which they are quite likely to call “culture.” Probably they were young about the time when Matthew Arnold was lecturing in the United States or at least when the reverberations of his lectures were still loud. They often have his phrases at the back of their minds: “sweetness and light”; “an acquaintance with the best that has been known and thought in the world”; “a liberal and intelligent eagerness about the things of the mind”; “the study of perfection”; and “making reason and the will of God prevail.” And with these things in their heads they send their sons and daughters to the college of the stadium and the fraternity!

But there is one curious—almost startling—fact to be noted at this point: that, whereas the American parents who have any such object are few, the number of their sons and daughters who are seeking just this is large. The youngsters do not know the phrases, Arnold's or anybody else's, but they have the impulse, a nebulous, unformulated ideal, a questing.

And so we have the third social purpose of the college, existing in the communal mind to-day, surviving only occasionally in the parental portion of society, but quite frequently felt, and I believe spreading, among the much-discussed Younger Generation; namely, the transmission of culture—

of knowledge and beauty and understanding, and of a delight in these things and in their uses in the world.

Well, given these three assorted social purposes, what are we going to make of them?

"Oh, yes," the reader may say, "I know what comes next. He will dismiss the first two with a few elaborate academic sarcasms and maintain that only the culture purpose is worthy of consideration."

A quite natural suspicion! But the reader will be mistaken in this case. I hold no such narrow view. I am prepared to assert vigorously that all three of the objectives I have described are valid, worthy, and creditable—that every one of them represents a real and serious social need, which ought to be fully met.

Certainly I never disparage the bread-and-butter motive—not after the long procession I have faced of earnest fathers and mothers, ready to do "anything," to scant themselves, not luxuries, but food and clothes, to give up savings, insurance, and needed medical attention, in order to afford their boys and girls a better start in this world than they themselves had. It is tremendous, heroic, this well-nigh universal aspiration of the lower economic classes in this country to set their children's feet on the road to that success which they in their own lives have missed; *success* meaning, concretely, money, and the pleasures, security, and prestige which money brings. To this end they are willing to deprive themselves of the few pleasures and the little security they might otherwise enjoy in their own persons.

A base materialistic aspiration? Materialistic, perhaps; but I will not agree to *base*. No altruism is base, and this ambition is for their children—a narrow, primitive altruism, no doubt; but the foundation, probably, of all other unselfishness. Moreover, their desire is not in the end wholly materialistic. It is the comfortably well-to-do who speak scornfully of materialism in connection with money. In this matter I go wholly with Dr. Johnson and Samuel Butler and George Gissing.

"You tell me," says Gissing (in *The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft*), "that money cannot buy the things most precious. Your commonplace proves that you have never known the lack of it. When I think of all the sorrow and the barrenness that has been wrought in my life by want of a few more pounds per annum than I was able to earn, I stand aghast at money's significance. What kindly joys have I lost—those simple forms of happiness to which every heart has claim—because of poverty! Meetings with those I loved made impossible year after year; sadness, misunderstanding, nay, cruel alienation, arising from inability to do the things I wished, and which I might have done had a little money helped me; endless instances of homely pleasure and contentment curtailed or forbidden by narrow means."

The parents with whom I talk could not have said that. But they have had experience not unlike Gissing's and have learned with him that, not physical comforts only, but the mental and spiritual graces, have a price; that he who would possess virtue and intelligence—"sweetness and light," if you like—

must pay for them with cash and a good deal of it. It is at bottom some sense of this which makes these parents so keen that John shall become an engineer and Helen a high school teacher.

It may, indeed, be argued that the bread-and-butter purpose does not deserve public financial support through taxes and philanthropy. This vocational ambition on the part of certain parents and their children, however laudable, is after all individualistic and selfish. We may applaud a family eagerness to get ahead in the second generation; let them succeed, by all means, if they can! But why should funds be contributed from the general stock to further the private success of particular individuals?

But I should not agree even to this. The young people in question are, of course, working for their own hand when they take vocational courses in college or in professional schools; but incidentally they are preparing themselves for much more useful service to society than they could otherwise be expected to render. This increment of serviceability is, it seems to me, a sufficient reason why society should encourage them to the extent of contributing free or partially free instruction; the young people and their parents do their full part, and pay for whatever differential advantage they obtain, by standing the much greater expense of maintenance during the training period.

But how about the superkindergarten purpose? Do I seriously maintain that that object is valid and worthy? If a rich man's son has no particular brains, no real intellectual interests, why should he go to college, just because he can afford it and does not know what else to do? And why should the alternative be that he must knock about some big city with his pocket full of money? His father should cut off his allowance and put him to work like anybody else.

Well, that is easy to say; but in practice it simply is not—practicable. And if you were a father with plenty of money, you would know it is not. I am not myself such a father, but I have talked with enough of those who are to appreciate the reality and seriousness of their problem.

Moreover, I am even better acquainted with a considerable number of the young people in question. Very charming boys and girls—well-nourished, of course; well-dressed; usually well-mannered (in spite of loud rumors to the contrary); with a presence, bearing, and address, and often with a gift of persuasive speech, which are admirable. It may be they are expensive social parasites; from the stern standpoint of economics I suppose they are; but after all they are human youngsters too. It is not their fault that they have more money than is good for them, and no more brains than most other people—in other words, not enough for high scholarship. We cannot expect that all of them will be intellectually gifted, just because Dad has cleaned up in Wall Street; Nature does not manage things so well as that.

I am not, of course, suggesting the opposite; that all or most of the children of the well-to-do are brainless. On the contrary, it has been pretty definitely established that the higher, and the very high, economic classes produce a number of gifted children which is proportionately very large.

But with the gifted, from whatever economic level, we are not concerned in connection with the superkindergarten purpose.

What are we to do with the inevitably numerous exceptions—the young men with sleek hair, wide trousers, coonskin coats, hip flasks, and Pierce-Arrows, in short, with all the qualifications for college except brains—and their sisters? They are all dressed up and have no place else to go to. I defy you to name any other institution or kind of place which is prepared to receive them and take care of them. In short, there *is* a real social need here, and a need with practically unlimited funds and influence behind it to demand and secure its satisfaction.

The practical upshot of the matter is that these young gentlemen (and their sisters) *are coming to college*, to be taken care of for four years more or less; and furthermore that they ought to be much better taken care of than they are at present. For under the system of private ownership and practically unrestricted inheritance these young people, in spite of their personal (intellectual) mediocrity, will in a few years succeed to places of large social and financial power in our American life. It is important, therefore, for the welfare of the general community, no less than for the sake of the boys and girls themselves and their parents, that the very best that can be done for them should be done.

If, however, we should be called upon to consider here a question parallel to that which I raised in connection with the bread-and-butter purpose, namely, as to whether these superkindergarten facilities should be provided at public expense, the answer, it seems to me, must be flatly in the negative. It is little better than absurd that our citizens in general should tax themselves to set up the expensive *milieu*, and operate the expensive system of games and other diversions, needed to carry these scions of the wealthy safely and reputably through the pleasant days of their post-adolescence; and to devote to this end funds bequeathed by pious donors "for the advancement of learning" comes perilously near to being a breach of trust. The college must take care of these "students," but there is no reason why it should be supported, in this part of its work, either by taxes or by gifts. These young men and women are well able to pay fees which should not only cover all the expenses of their tutelage but should also yield a profit to the corporation—as actually happens at present in the case of the private secondary schools which shelter the earlier years of the same group.

Please compare the opinion to this same effect expressed by Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., in an address reported in the *New York Times* of June 16, 1927. In the course of his address Mr. Rockefeller said:

"To-day the majority of the students go to college for a good time, for social considerations, or to fit themselves to earn money. The idea of service to the community is no longer the chief consideration. It would seem, therefore, that under these changed conditions the student might properly be expected to pay for the benefits he receives."

As for the culture purpose: if it were only for the parents of my acquaintance, I should be tempted to say that this purpose is rapidly becoming obsolete, and might well be disregarded in any broad and dispassionate study of the modern college. But it is my privilege, in my present work, to have daily conversations with young men which convince me that this purpose is recrudescent in the newer generation, and is still, therefore, a thing to be reckoned with.

And so we come again to the question, "What are we to do about it? Let me assume for the moment that the reader is prepared to grant the correctness of my analysis—to concede that the community does hold these three differing social purposes in connection with the college; that all three purposes are, in varying degrees perhaps, valid and worthy; and that all three must be taken care of by the college. What of it? This conclusion seems to leave us precisely in the *status quo*.

On the contrary, I should answer, this discrimination of the three widely divergent purposes which the college is now trying to serve lays bare, for the first time, the root of practically all the difficulties and errors from which the college of to-day is suffering. Nearly all our troubles go back to the fact that we are attempting with one and the same faculty, with one and the same set of requirements, standards, and methods, with the same kind of discipline, to serve three groups of students *whose objects and needs are so different as to be incompatible*.

We press toward three goals set in different directions. If we progress a little towards one of them, we are by so much more distant from the other two, and are presently forced to run (or creep) back. Hence the pitiable hesitations and shilly-shallyings which our faculties constantly exhibit; and hence the justifiable dissatisfaction of all three groups of students, and their parents, with what they are getting.

I said that *the three objects are so different as to be incompatible*.

This fact is most strikingly exhibited, perhaps, in connection with the superkindergarten group. These charming young men and women are by definition not highbrows. They are merely nice normal persons—quite as able in every way as "the man in the street"; in fact, distinctly more able than that, on the average. But they lack the really superior mentality needed for the adequate mastery of any of the learned or technical professions; and certainly they have no such enthusiastic devotion to the things of the mind for their own sake as is fundamental to the culture purpose (if culture be assumed to mean, really, something more than merely ornamental accomplishments). Accordingly, their presence in the college tends to drag down the standards.

It may be said that this should not happen, that all those who cannot meet an ideally rigorous requirement should simply be "flunked out." But that would be too inhumane; and if we are to have this group with us at all, it is unjust. As a matter of fact, a good deal of "flunking out" is done, but not consistently; and it is not going to be done consistently anywhere. On the contrary, the requirements are insensibly lowered, the intellectual pace is

slackened, the methods are adapted, in part, to the needs of this element. And at the same time the general discipline of the institution is made more strict and paternalistic than is helpful for the other groups; because this superkindergarten crowd must have a considerable measure of compulsion and surveillance if they are to do any intellectual work at all.

But that is not the worst of it. The worst is that this group, with their fine clothes, their motor cars, their luxurious fraternity houses, their expensive scale of living in general, come to dominate the entire student body; just as the corresponding group outside the college, by similar methods of pecuniary display, dominate mature society. In other words, the superkindergarten group set the social tone, *and presently the intellectual tone*, of the whole college.

Inevitably this group develop a defensive contempt for that severe intellectual labor of which they themselves are incapable. This defensive contempt finds expression in the idea that the proper attitude of really eligible persons towards books and learning is an insouciant neglect. It gives birth to such phrases as *greasy grind*, to brand any one who betrays genuine zeal for knowledge; to such slogans as *the gentleman's grade*, implying clearly enough that it is socially incorrect to do more work in any course than is necessary to get by—to meet the minimum requirements.

All this does not matter in itself or for the superkindergarten groups; but it is exceedingly bad for the other two groups. Many young men and women with plenty of ability, with a natural aptitude for intellectual endeavor, fully capable of being fired with a genuine professional enthusiasm or with a genuine cultural enthusiasm, have all such sentiments dampened and quenched by the prevailing social disapprobation. And most of those few who are stiff-necked enough, mentally and morally, to defy the general scorn and cling to their intellectual interests are forced into an unhealthy apologetic, defensive attitude, on behalf of the very thing which is most to their credit and most useful to their purposes.

It is inevitable that in our general society outside the college a similar attitude of contempt for intellectual pursuits and enthusiasms should prevail—the attitude which has made the terms *highbrow* and *intelligentsia* into epithets of scorn. Such an attitude is natural and probably healthy on the part of the great majority, being necessary to the preservation of their self-respect. But there ought to be, even in America, one place, namely, the college—or some colleges—where the things of the mind can come into their own, can be cherished and applauded, can escape, for a little while, from the necessity of concealment or apology. The presence of the superkindergarten group has destroyed this last refuge.

But it must be noted, also—if we are to be fair all around,—that the superkindergartners, while they do immeasurable harm to the other two groups, receive considerable damage in return. I said above that the standards, methods, and discipline are adapted *in part* to the capacity of the superkindergarten group. But only in part. The faculty feel not only the downward drag of the superkindergartners, but also the upward pull of the gifted students, of

whom they still have an appreciable number in their classes. The faculty themselves, moreover, are drawn chiefly—many slurs to the contrary notwithstanding—from this gifted element, so that their sympathies are all with the professional and cultural purposes. Few professors, in fact, can be brought to understand the real purpose and needs of the superkindergarten group. Consequently, they are forever nagging them; interfering with their healthful games and other normal occupations; harassing them with requirements and checking them up by standards which, for this group, are not merely irrelevant but positively misjudged and harmful. They even, in many instances, “flunk them out”—which is obviously no way to discharge the responsibility of taking care of them.

The other two purposes—professional and cultural—are not so profoundly inimical to each other as the superkindergarten purpose is to them and they to it; but they too clash to a considerable extent.

The professional group have a very definite utilitarian motive, from which they ought not to be distracted; they must follow a rigidly prescribed course of study, dictated by the requirements of their profession; and they must be put through this curriculum at a fairly intensive pace. The cultural group, on the other hand, have more indefinitely and mainly non-utilitarian objects, from which they in turn ought not to be distracted; they must have large freedom of election; and they need above everything a considerable margin for discursive leisure. When you have two groups together, it is nearly impossible to keep these vital differences clear in the minds of students or even of the faculty. In certain subjects the two groups are sure to be put into the same classes—from practical considerations of economy—and in these classes the needed differentiation of objectives and methods becomes impossible.

Moreover, the faculty is almost certain to be divided between professors who feel principally the cultural purpose and others who lean strongly towards the professional purpose of the college, and these two clans are forever at cross purposes.

The culturally minded professors are always trying to “liberalize” the professional courses. They are earnest, for example, to offer some morsels of culture to the chemists, by requiring the latter to take Nineteenth Century Poetry in the sophomore year and Appreciation of Art as seniors. Such efforts, in their present form, are merely annoying and wasteful. If a chemistry student has not acquired general culture before he enters upon his chemistry course, he must either do without it, or get it afterwards, through his private reading and other contacts, as many professional men do. But while he is a chemistry student he should study—chemistry; should live chemistry, eat and drink and sleep chemistry, so as to become supersaturated with the subject matter, methods, and spirit of that profession—just as the medics do in a medical school, or the law students in a law school. (You do not offer *them* any Shelley and Keats or any Renaissance madonnas!) The majority of the professional students react properly enough to such courses by scorning them

and giving them as little attention as possible; but even so there is some distraction and loss of time.

On the other hand, those professors who have the professional purpose at heart interfere somewhat with the cultural group. They tend to adopt a supercilious attitude towards what seems to them the dilettantism of subject matter and method in the cultural curriculum, and constantly throw their weight in favor of "stiffer courses," more science and mathematics for all, more numerous and stricter prescriptions, and more mechanical methods—all with the best intentions in the world.

The conclusion is obvious. We should have, not one college, in which we distractedly attempt to serve three incompatible purposes, but three colleges. Or rather the professional curricula—in chemistry, journalism, education, home economics, and the like,—which clutter up many colleges of liberal arts, especially in the large universities, should be gently-but-firmly removed from the college, and taken care of—to their own great advantage—in separate professional schools, like those of medicine and law. And then the college proper, i.e., the nonprofessional school, should be divided into two colleges, one for the superkindergartners and one for the cultural group.

Let no one suppose that this suggestion of a new type of college, to be devoted explicitly and single-mindedly to the superkindergartners, is intended to be humorous. I am absolutely in earnest. I have shown, I trust, how serious the need for such an institution is. And there are a number of colleges in this country which have, in fact, been evolving rapidly in this direction, and could make a stupendous success if they would only recognize their manifest-destiny, clarify their purposes, and adapt their standards, curricula, methods, and discipline accordingly.

Since the term superkindergarten may seem to be invidious—though intended to be only accurately descriptive,—let me call this type of institution the Gentleman's College; the word gentleman being used, of course, in its pecuniary implications—which after all have always constituted, and probably always will constitute, the fundamental significance of the term.

The ideal Gentleman's College should be situated in a rural community at some distance from the large cities. Its campus should be attractively landscaped, and its buildings Collegiate Gothic, tastefully draped with ivy, and displaying plenty of marble and bronze, and carved wood and leaded glass. It should, of course, have ample stadia and gymnasiums and a lavish equipment of playing fields for every kind of sport; together with handsome dormitories and a series of club buildings to furnish numerous social centers, with facilities for all imaginable kinds of "activities." For it is my mature, considered conviction that athletic sports and other "activities" should constitute the essential core of the curriculum and discipline of such a college.

The faculty and administrative officers of a Gentleman's College should be selected with great care; the primary qualification being real sympathy with the type of young men to be taken charge of, and a genuine interest in their sports and other recreations. In other words, the professors, deans, and other

officers should themselves be, first of all, gentlemen, in the same sense as their students; thoroughly educated and accomplished gentlemen; but not persons warped from normality by the excessive intellectualism which characterizes so many college teachers. Some of these gentlemanly professors and deans would doubtless be scholars as well, particularly in the more ornamental branches of learning; but the mere scholar should be rigidly excluded. The type needed is the same type that renders such splendid service in the more expensive private secondary schools. Such men could do this job infinitely better than the average faculty of the existing colleges.

The curriculum should include a somewhat rigid course in the mechanical essentials of English composition; for the young people in question must become reputably literate. It should include also the modern foreign languages, and lecture courses in English literature and foreign literatures, in the social sciences, in philosophy, and in the fine arts; since all these subjects make their contributions to the social amenities. There would be little need for mathematics or the sciences; but doubtless such a college would offer, as electives, the full complement of subjects offered in our existing institutions.

Admission might well be based upon certification from approved private secondary schools. The essential point in this connection is that a high matriculation fee—say, one hundred to two hundred dollars—should be charged; and the annual tuition might well be around a thousand. It is this matter of fees which would take care of the proper selection. The Gentleman's College would not exist for the poor boy. The lower economic levels should send many students into the professional schools, and also into colleges, if there were such, devoted to the culture purpose. But those who are both intellectually mediocre and poor should obviously go to work. The super-kindergarten is, by the nature of the case, a luxury of the well-to-do.

Each student in the Gentleman's College should receive a large amount of personal attention from the faculty and administration—should be zealously supervised and tended, as to health, habits, manners, sports, studies, and accomplishments. And once a student has been admitted to a Gentleman's College, he should not be liable to dismissal, within four years at least, except for dangerous moral delinquency. He should be regarded as a member of the family or fraternity of the college, not to be thrust out for minor deficiencies, but rather given extra and special care in proportion to his needs.

Such a college should, of course, announce its special purpose to the world with entire honesty. It should proclaim, in its catalogues and other literature, that it is not the purpose of this college to turn out musty pedants or visionary (and potentially dangerous) intellectuals, but to prepare normal young men for positions of leadership in the American social and business world.

I feel sure that judicious advertisement along these lines, together with the attraction of high fees, would speedily draw a splendid clientele. This clientele would be abundantly satisfied. They would be getting what they want and need, and are willing to pay for, and what they cannot at present get satisfactorily in any college in America; although, as noted above, there are certain

institutions which are already making progress in this direction. Any college, reasonably well-situated and well-equipped, which would consciously adopt this program, and carry it out consistently, could within ten years attain an enviable primacy of social repute among all our institutions, and realize its wildest dreams as to students and funds. And its success would be deserved, for it would be, for the first time, doing superbly one of the three jobs which the American community demands of the college.

Meanwhile a few other colleges should devote themselves with equal explicitness and single-mindedness to the care of the culture purpose.

Since the word culture is a little old-fashioned, let us call this type of institution the Scholar's College. (I picked this phrase the other day from the lips of a prominent senior, who used it in derision.) It is not intended to imply that the scholar may not be also a gentleman in the less materialistic meaning of the term, or even in the materialistic or pecuniary sense; frequently he will be a gentleman in both senses; but it will be *qua* scholar rather than *qua* gentleman that he will be welcome in the Scholar's College. And that college will have a place for some who, at the beginning at any rate, are not gentlemen in any sense.

Any existing institution which should aspire to become an ideal Scholar's College will need to make changes much more drastic than those sketched above for the establishment of a Gentleman's College. The nature of these changes and the reasons for them will form the subject matter of the chapters to follow; for, of course, the Scholar's College is the Real College which I propose to picture.

So far I have tried to make it clear—as the first vital necessity—that the *exclusive* purpose of the Real College, the Scholar's College, must be—to use the old-fashioned word again—culture. The bread-and-butter purpose must there be held in abeyance for the time being, and the superkindergarten purpose must be flatly denied and excluded.

As to what this culture is—we shall never be able to define it satisfactorily, but we know what we mean. We mean knowledge—quite a good deal of knowledge; some of it superficial, some intensive and exact; including both facts and the interpretation of facts, with a critical discrimination between the two. We mean enjoyment—appreciation, of books, art, nature, and human beings (“the world is so full of a number of things”). We mean freedom—self-emancipation (*Selbstentfremdung*); getting loose, so far as may be possible, from all the crowding pre-judgments of family, class, party, creed, nation, and century, into the cool isolation of disinterested thought. We mean understanding—in some measure—of the laws of nature and the heart of man, and of the human situation on this tiny, short-lived planet. And we mean ideals—of truth, beauty, and duty (or service or *noblesse oblige*), which we believe can be most truly and nobly conceived only in the light of such knowledge, enjoyment, freedom, and understanding.

And if there be, or can be, any institution which can transmit such possessions year after year to some considerable body of selected youth, we hold that

that institution will deserve well of the Republic—no matter what other things it may of necessity refuse to do. It will be, in fact, continuing—or rather resuming—the original purpose of the first American college: that of providing, in a figurative sense at least, “a ministry to the churches.”

We are living—it is a platitude to say so—in the midst of swifter changes than have ever happened before within historic times; revolutionary changes in our physical modes of life, which must induce, and are already inducing, great slippings and shiftings in all our economic, political, and ethical concepts. We are warned almost daily that the survival of civilization, and possibly of mankind, depends upon the wisdom and the speed with which we can reformulate these concepts; that, in the words of Mr. Wells, we are entered in a race between education and catastrophe. It would be the purpose of a Real College to train men and women capable of such training for the ministry of this reformulation, to be among its prophets, disciples, and missionaries—the ministry of a new civilization.

EDUCATION BY BOOKS¹

by Mark Van Doren

LET us assume that an institution was founded in the year 1933 for the sole purpose of requiring its members to read certain books. These members were called students, for the institution was something like a school or college; and there were a few exacting elders on hand who after announcing their authority began to teach.

The teaching in this institution, like the studying, was at the same time simple and difficult. It consisted in the first place, as I have said, in requiring the students to read certain books. It consisted next in requiring that an intelligible account be rendered of the contents of each book. And it consisted last of all in requiring that the readers be able, in the course of discussing a given book, to prove that their memory of all previous books was accurate and complete.

It was as simple as that, and as difficult. The books were the acknowledged masterpieces of the past three thousand years—masterpieces of poetry, of history, of philosophy, of fiction, of theology, of natural science, of political and economic theory. There were two hundred or so of them, and none of them was read in an abridged edition. Neither was any of them approached through a digest or a commentary, or through a biography of the author which told how many wives he had and what the biographer believed to be the modern significance of his mind. No, these books which the teachers had selected for the students to read—Homer, the Bible, Herodotus, Thucy-

¹ By permission of the *Nation* and the author.

dides, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Lucretius, Vergil, Horace, Ovid, Plutarch, Lucian, Marcus Aurelius, Plotinus, St. Augustine, the Volsunga Saga, the Song of Roland, Thomas Aquinas, Dante, Petrarch, Chaucer, Leonardo da Vinci, Machiavelli, Erasmus, More, Rabelais, Montaigne, Cervantes, Bacon, Shakespeare, Galileo, Grotius, Hobbes, Descartes, Leibnitz, Corneille, Racine, Molière, Milton, Spinoza, Locke, Newton, Swift, Voltaire, Fielding, Hume, Rousseau, Adam Smith, Kant, Gibbon, Bentham, Goethe, Malthus, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Balzac, Mill, Darwin, Dickens, Thackeray, Marx, Tolstoy, Dostoevski, Pasteur, Ibsen, Nietzsche, Freud, Proust, Einstein—these authors, or rather the principal works of these authors, were read naked and entire; and understood.

A few students—some say a good many—had got into the institution by mistake. They complained about the lack of freedom to read what they pleased; some of these books, they insisted, were not suited to their personalities, and they had supposed that what one went to college for was to develop one's personality. Precisely, answered the head preceptor, closing the door behind them with the most obvious and reckless relief. Others proved to be helpless once they were face to face with an author's original sentences; they had been brought up on outlines, introductions, histories of literature and thought, and collections of excerpts, and so had long ago lost whatever ability to read they had been born with. Still others had expected to learn a trade or a profession. Then there was a final group of pedantic youngsters who snorted at the reading list because it was not contemporary. They wanted as swift an introduction as possible to the civilization about them. To the reply that this was that, they were very scornful as they scurried off to become freshmen in some up-to-date college where field trips to factories alternated in the weekly schedule with lectures on large and immediate subjects.

Those gone, the others settled down to the task that had been so arbitrarily assigned them. At regular intervals they met in small groups with two or more teachers who questioned them closely concerning the contents of the required, the inevitable book. If they revealed by their answers that they had read it badly, they were forced to read it again. There was no going forward until Aristotle's conception of the individual, or Grotius's theory of natural law, or the unity of "King Lear" was clearly stated. No excursions were made into the culture of the Greeks or the domestic life of the Middle Ages; merely the books themselves were read, discussed, and understood. And so on for four years.

At the end of which time a generation of students was set loose upon a world with many of whose aspects they were not at the moment prepared to cope. The only thing, indeed, to be said in their favor was that they were educated. They were equipped, that is, with so much understanding of what the best human brains had done in three thousand years that they realized without difficulty how few contemporary brains—naturally—were of the best. They were so competent in the recognition of theory that they felt strangely at home in a world most of whose citizens lived by theories without knowing

it. They were able to reduce a kind of order out of the childish chaos which they slowly recognized contemporary literature to be. They missed a great many ideas and distinctions which they knew had been fruitful in past centuries, and some of them set about considering the possibility of restoring these to an intellectually impoverished world. Whether they succeeded is not yet known. But it can be said of them that in their own minds they continued to be fairly secure. For never would there be written a book which they could not understand simply by reading it from the first word to the last. They might not save the world. They might not change it. But they would comprehend it.

LIBERAL KNOWLEDGE¹

by John Henry Newman

I SUPPOSE the *primâ facie* view which the public at large would take of a University, considered as a place of Education, is nothing more or less than a place for acquiring a great deal of knowledge on a great many subjects. Memory is one of the first developed of the mental faculties; a boy's business when he goes to school is to learn, that is, to store up things in his memory. For some years his intellect is little more than an instrument for taking in facts, or a receptacle for storing them; he welcomes them as fast as they come to him; he lives on what is without; he has his eyes ever about him; he has a lively susceptibility of impressions; he imbibes information of every kind; and little does he make his own in a true sense of the word, living rather upon his neighbours all around him. He has opinions, religious, political, and literary, and, for a boy, is very positive in them and sure about them; but he gets them from his schoolfellows, or his masters, or his parents, as the case may be. Such as he is in his other relations, such also is he in his school exercises; his mind is observant, sharp, ready, retentive; he is almost passive in the acquisition of knowledge. I say this in no disparagement of the idea of a clever boy. Geography, chronology, history, language, natural history, he heaps up the matter of these studies as treasures for a future day. It is the seven years of plenty with him: he gathers in by handfuls, like the Egyptians, without counting; and though, as time goes on, there is exercise for his argumentative powers in the Elements of Mathematics, and for his taste in the Poets and Orators, still, while at school, or at least, till quite the last years of his time, he acquires, and little more; and when he is leaving for the University, he is mainly the creature of foreign influences and circumstances, and made up of accidents, homogeneous or not, as the case may be. Moreover, the moral habits, which are a boy's praise, encourage and assist this result; that is, diligence, assiduity, regularity, despatch, persevering application; for these are

¹ From J. H. Newman, *On the Scope and Nature of University Education*.

the direct conditions of acquisition, and naturally lead to it. Acquirements, again, are emphatically producible, and at a moment; they are a something to show, both for master and scholar; an audience, even though ignorant themselves of the subjects of an examination, can comprehend when questions are answered and when they are not. Here again is a reason why mental culture should in the minds of men be identified with the acquisition of knowledge.

The same notion possesses the public mind, when it passes on from the thought of a school to that of a University: and with the best of reasons so far as this, that there is no true culture without acquirements, and that philosophy presupposes knowledge. It requires a great deal of reading, or a wide range of information, to warrant us in putting forth our opinions on any serious subject; and without such learning the most original mind may be able indeed to dazzle, to amuse, to refute, to perplex, but not to come to any useful result or any trustworthy conclusion. There are indeed persons who profess a different view of the matter, and even act upon it. Every now and then you will find a person of vigorous or fertile mind, who relies upon his own resources, despises all former authors, and gives the world, with the utmost fearlessness, his views upon religion, or history, or any other popular subject. And his works may sell for a while; he may get a name in his day; but this will be all. His readers are sure to find in the long run that his doctrines are mere theories, and not the expression of facts, that they are chaff instead of bread, and then his popularity drops as suddenly as it rose.

Knowledge, then, is the indispensable condition of expansion of mind, and the instrument of attaining to it; this cannot be denied, it is ever to be insisted on; I begin with it as a first principle; however, the very truth of it carries men too far, and confirms to them the notion that it is the whole of it. A narrow mind is thought to be that which contains little knowledge; and an enlarged mind, that which holds a deal; and what seems to put the matter beyond dispute is, the fact of the number of studies which are pursued in a University, by its very profession. Lectures are given on every kind of subject; examinations are held; prizes awarded. There are moral, metaphysical, physical Professors; Professors of languages, of history, of mathematics, of experimental science. Lists of questions are published, wonderful for their range and depth, variety and difficulty; treatises are written, which carry upon their very face the evidence of extensive reading or multifarious information; what then is wanted for mental culture to a person of large reading and scientific attainments? what is grasp of mind but acquirement? where shall philosophical repose be found, but in the consciousness and enjoyment of large intellectual possessions?

And yet this notion is, I conceive, a mistake, and my present business is to show that it is one, and that the end of a Liberal Education is not mere knowledge, or knowledge considered in its *matter*; and I shall best attain my object by actually setting down some cases, which will be generally granted to be instances of the process of enlightenment or enlargement of mind, and others which are not, and thus, by the comparison, you will be able to judge

for yourself, gentlemen, whether Knowledge, that is, acquirement, is after all the real principle of the enlargement, or whether that principle is not rather something beyond it.

For instance, let a person, whose experience has hitherto been confined to the more calm and unpretending scenery of these islands, whether here or in England, go for the first time into parts where physical nature puts on her wilder and more awful forms, whether at home or abroad, as into mountainous districts; or let one, who has ever lived in a quiet village, go for the first time to a great metropolis—then I suppose he will have a sensation which perhaps he never had before. He has a feeling not in addition or increase of former feelings, but of something different in its nature. He will perhaps be borne forward and find for a time that he has lost his bearings. He has made a certain progress, and he has a consciousness of mental enlargement; he does not stand where he did, he has a new centre, and a range of thoughts to which he was before a stranger.

Again, the view of the heavens which the telescope opens upon us, if allowed to fill and possess the mind, may almost whirl it round and make it dizzy. It brings in a flood of ideas, and is rightly called an intellectual enlargement, whatever is meant by the term.

And so again, the sight of beasts of prey and other foreign animals, their strangeness, the originality (if I may use the term) of their forms and gestures and habits and their variety and independence of each other, throw us out of ourselves into another creation, and as if under another Creator, if I may so express the temptation which may come on the mind. We seem to have new faculties, or a new exercise for our faculties, by this addition to our knowledge; like a prisoner who, having been accustomed to wear manacles or fetters, suddenly finds his arms and legs free.

Hence Physical Science generally, in all its departments, as bringing before us the exuberant riches and resources, yet the orderly course, of the Universe, elevates and excites the student, and at first, I may say, almost takes away his breath, while in time it exercises a tranquillising influence upon him.

Again, the study of history is said to enlarge and enlighten the mind, and why? because, as I conceive, it gives it a power of judging of passing events, and of all events, and a conscious superiority over them, which before it did not possess.

And in like manner, what is called seeing the world, entering into active life, going into society, travelling, gaining acquaintance with the various classes of the community, coming into contact with the principles and modes of thought of various parties, interests, and races, their views, aims, habits and manners, their religious creeds and forms of worship—gaining experience how various yet how alike men are, how low-minded, how bad, how opposed, yet how confident in their opinions; all this exerts a perceptible influence upon the mind, which it is impossible to mistake, be it good or be it bad, and is popularly called its enlargement.

And then again, the first time the mind comes across the arguments and

speculations of unbelievers, and feels what a novel light they cast upon what he has hitherto accounted sacred; and still more, if it gives in to them and embraces them, and throws off as so much prejudice what it has hitherto held, and, as if waking from a dream, begins to realise to its imagination that there is now no such thing as law and the transgression of law, that sin is a phantom, and punishment a bug-bear, that it is free to sin, free to enjoy the world and the flesh; and still further, when it does enjoy them, and reflects that it may think and hold just what it will, that "the world is all before it where to choose," and what system to build up as its own private persuasion; when this torrent of bad thoughts rushes over and inundates it, who will deny that the fruit of the tree of knowledge, or what the mind takes for knowledge, has made it one of the gods, with a sense of expansion and elevation—an intoxication in reality, still, so far as the subjective state of the mind goes, an illumination? Hence the fanaticism of individuals or nations, who suddenly cast off their Maker. Their eyes are opened, and, like the judgment-stricken king in the Tragedy, they see two suns, and a magic universe, out of which they look back upon their former state of faith and innocence with a sort of contempt and indignation, as if they were then but fools, and the dupes of imposture.

On the other hand, Religion has its own enlargement, and an enlargement, not of tumult, but of peace. It is often remarked of uneducated persons, who have hitherto thought little of the unseen world, that, on their turning to God, looking into themselves, regulating their hearts, reforming their conduct, and meditating on death and judgment, heaven and hell, they seem to become, in point of intellect, different beings from what they were. Before, they took things as they came, and thought no more of one thing than another. But now every event has a meaning; they have their own estimate of whatever happens to them; they are mindful of times and seasons, and compare the present with the past; and the world, no longer dull, monotonous, unprofitable, and hopeless, is a various and complicated drama, with parts and an object, and an awful moral.

Now from these instances, to which many more might be added, it is plain, first, that the communication of knowledge certainly is either a condition or the means of that sense of enlargement or enlightenment, of which at this day we hear so much in certain quarters: this cannot be denied; but next, it is equally plain, that such communication is not the whole of the process. The enlargement consists, not merely in the passive reception into the mind of a number of ideas hitherto unknown to it, but in the mind's energetic and simultaneous action upon and towards and among those new ideas, which are rushing in upon it. It is the action of a formative power, reducing to order and meaning the matter of our acquirements; it is a making the objects of our knowledge subjectively our own, or, to use a familiar word, it is a digestion of what we receive, into the substance of our previous state of thought; and without this no enlargement is said to follow. There is no enlargement, unless there be a comparison of ideas one with another, as they come before the mind, and a systematising of them. We feel our minds to be growing and expanding

then, when we not only learn, but refer what we learn to what we know already. It is not a mere addition to our knowledge which is the illumination; but the locomotion, the movement onwards, of that mental centre, to which both what we know and what we are learning, the accumulating mass of our requirements, gravitates. And therefore a truly great intellect, and recognised to be such by the common opinion of mankind, such as the intellect of Aristotle, or of St. Thomas, or of Newton, or of Goethe (I purposely take instances within and without the Catholic pale, when I would speak of the intellect as such), is one which takes a connected view of old and new, past and present, far and near, and which has an insight into the influence of all these one on another; without which there is no whole, and no centre. It possesses the knowledge, not only of things, but also of their mutual and true relations; knowledge, not merely considered as acquirement, but as philosophy.

Accordingly, when this analytical, distributive, harmonising process is away, the mind experiences no enlargement, and is not reckoned as enlightened or comprehensive, whatever it may add to its knowledge. For instance a great memory, as I have already said, does not make a philosopher, any more than a dictionary can be called a grammar. There are men who embrace in their minds a vast multitude of ideas, but with little sensibility about their real relations towards each other. These may be antiquarians, annalists, naturalists; they may be learned in the law; they may be versed in statistics; they are most useful in their own place; I should shrink from speaking disrespectfully of them; still, there is nothing in such attainments to guarantee the absence of narrowness of mind. If they are nothing more than well-read men, or men of information, they have not what specially deserves the name of culture of mind, or fulfils the type of Liberal Education.

In like manner we sometimes fall in with persons who have seen much of the world, and of the men who, in their day, have played a conspicuous part in it, but who generalise nothing, and have no observation, in the true sense of the word. They abound in information in detail, curious and entertaining, about men and things; and, having lived under the influence of no very clear or settled principles, religious or political, they speak of every one and everything, only as so many phenomena, which are complete in themselves, and lead to nothing, not discussing them, or teaching any truth, or instructing the hearer, but simply talking. No one would say that these persons, well informed as they are, had attained to any great culture of intellect or to philosophy.

The case is the same still more strikingly where the persons in question are beyond dispute men of inferior powers and deficient education. Perhaps they have been much in foreign countries, and they receive, in a passive, otiose, unfruitful way, the various facts which are forced upon them there. Seafaring men, for example, range from one end of the earth to the other; but the multiplicity of external objects which they have encountered forms no symmetrical and consistent picture upon their imagination; they see the tapestry of human life as it were on the wrong side, and it tells no story. They

sleep, and they rise up, and they find themselves now in Europe, now in Asia; they see visions of great cities and wild regions; they are in the marts of commerce or amid the islands of the South; they gaze on Pompey's Pillar or on the Andes; and nothing which meets them carries them forward or backward to any idea beyond itself. Nothing has a drift or relation; nothing has a history or a promise. Everything stands by itself, and comes and goes in its turn, like the shifting scenes of a show, which leave the spectator where he was. Perhaps you are near such a man on a particular occasion, and expect him to be shocked or perplexed at something which occurs; but one thing is much the same to him as another, or if he is perplexed, it is as not knowing what to say, whether it is right to admire, or to ridicule, or to disapprove, while conscious that some expression of opinion is expected from him; for in fact he has no standard of judgment at all, and no landmarks to guide him to a conclusion. Such is mere acquisition, and, I repeat, no one would dream of calling it philosophy.

Instances such as these confirm, by the contrast, the conclusion I have already drawn from those which preceded them. That only is true enlargement of mind which is the power of viewing many things at once as one whole, of referring them severally to their true place in the universal system, of understanding their respective values, and determining their mutual dependence. Thus is that form of Universal Knowledge, of which I have on a former occasion spoken, set up in the individual intellect, and constitutes its perfection. Possessed of this real illumination, the mind never views any part of the extended subject-matter of Knowledge without recollecting that it is but a part, or without the associations which spring from this recollection. It makes everything in some sort lead to everything else; it would communicate the image of the whole to every separate portion, till that whole becomes in imagination like a spirit, everywhere pervading and penetrating its component parts, and giving them one definite meaning. Just as our bodily organs, when mentioned, recall their function in the body, as the word "creation" suggests the Creator, and "subjects" a sovereign, so, in the mind of the Philosopher, as we are abstractedly conceiving of him, the elements of the physical and moral world, sciences, arts, pursuits, ranks, offices, events, opinions, individualities, are all viewed as one, with correlative functions, and as gradually by successive combinations converging, one and all, to the true centre.

To have even a portion of this illuminative reason and true philosophy is the highest state to which nature can aspire, in the way of intellect; it puts the mind above the influences of chance and necessity, above anxiety, suspense, tumult, and superstition, which are the portion of the many. Men, whose minds are possessed with some one object, take exaggerated views of its importance, are feverish in the pursuit of it, make it the measure of things which are utterly foreign to it, and are startled and despond if it happens to fail them. They are ever in alarm or in transport. Those on the other hand who have no object or principle whatever to hold by, lose their way, every step

they take. They are thrown out, and do not know what to think or say, at every fresh juncture; they have no view of persons, or occurrences, or facts, which come suddenly upon them, and they hang upon the opinion of others, for want of internal resources. But the intellect, which has been disciplined to the perfection of its powers, which knows, and thinks while it knows, which has learned to leaven the dense mass of facts and events with the elastic force of reason, such an intellect cannot be partial, cannot be exclusive, cannot be impetuous, cannot be at a loss, cannot but be patient, collected, and majestically calm, because it discerns the end in every beginning, the origin in every end, the law in every interruption, the limit in each delay; because it ever knows where it stands, and how its path lies from one point to another. It is the *τετράγωνος* of the Peripatetic, and has the "nil admirari" of the Stoic—

Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,
Atque metus omnes, et inexorabile fatum
Subject pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari.

There are men who, when in difficulties, originate at the moment vast ideas or dazzling projects; who, under the influence of excitement, are able to cast a light, almost as if from inspiration, on a subject or course of action which comes before them; who have a sudden presence of mind equal to any emergency, rising with the occasion, and an undaunted magnanimous bearing, and an energy and keenness which is but made intense by opposition. This is genius, this is heroism; it is the exhibition of a natural gift, which no culture can teach, at which no Institution can aim; here, on the contrary, we are concerned, not with mere nature, but with training and teaching. That perfection of the Intellect, which is the result of Education, and its *beau idéal*, to be imparted to individuals in their respective measures, is the clear, calm, accurate vision and comprehension of all things, as far as the finite mind can embrace them, each in its place, and with its own characteristics upon it. It is almost prophetic from its knowledge of history; it is almost heart-searching from its knowledge of human nature; it has almost supernatural charity from its freedom from littleness and prejudice; it has almost the repose of faith, because nothing can startle it; it has almost the beauty and harmony of heavenly contemplation, so intimate is it with the eternal order of things and the music of the spheres.

And now, if I may take for granted that the true and adequate end of intellectual training and of a University is not Learning or Acquirement, but rather, is Thought or Reason exercised upon Knowledge, or what may be called Philosophy, I shall be in a position to explain the various mistakes which at the present day beset the subject of University Education.

I say then, if we would improve the intellect, first of all, we must ascend: we cannot gain real knowledge on a level; we must generalise, we must reduce to method, we must have a grasp of principles, and group and shape our acquisitions by them. It matters not whether our field of operation be wide or limited; in every case, to command it, is to mount above it. Who has not

felt the irritation of mind and impatience created by a deep, rich country, visited for the first time, with winding lanes, and high hedges, and green steepes, and tangled woods, and everything smiling indeed, but in a maze? The same feeling comes upon us in a strange city, when we have no map of its streets. Hence you hear of practised travellers, when they first come into a place, mounting some high hill or church tower, by way of reconnoitring its neighbourhood. In like manner you must be above your knowledge, gentlemen, not under it, or it will oppress you; and the more you have of it the greater will be the load. The learning of a Salmasius or a Burman, unless you are its master, will be your tyrant. "Imperat aut servit;" if you can wield it with a strong arm, it is a great weapon; otherwise,

Vis consili expers
Mole ruit suâ.

You will be overwhelmed, like Tarpeia, by the heavy wealth which you have exacted from tributary generations.

Instances abound; there are authors who are as pointless as they are inexhaustible in their literary resources. They measure knowledge by bulk, as it lies in the rude block, without symmetry, without design. How many commentators are there on the Classics, how many on Holy Scripture, from whom we rise up, wondering at the learning which has passed before us, and wondering why it passed! How many writers are there of Ecclesiastical History, such as Mosheim or Du Pin, who, breaking up their subject into details, destroy its life, and defraud us of the whole by their anxiety about the parts! The sermons, again, of the English Divines in the seventeenth century, how often are they mere repertoires of miscellaneous and officious learning! Of course Catholics also may read without thinking; and in their case, equally as with Protestants, it holds good, that that knowledge of theirs is unworthy of the name, knowledge which they have not thought through, and thought out. Such readers are only possessed by their knowledge, not possessed of it; nay, in matter of fact they are often even carried away by it, without any volition of their own. Recollect, the Memory can tyrannise as well as the Imagination. Derangement, I believe, has been considered as a loss of control over the sequence of ideas. The mind, once set in motion, is henceforth deprived of the power of initiation, and becomes the victim of a train of associations, one thought suggesting another, in the way of cause and effect, as if by a mechanical process, or some physical necessity. No one, who has had experience of men of studious habits, but must recognise the existence of a parallel phenomenon in the case of those who have over-stimulated the Memory. In such persons Reason acts almost as feebly and as impotently as in the madman; once fairly started on any subject whatever, they have no power of self-control; they passively endure the succession of impulses which are evolved out of the original exciting cause; they are passed on from one idea to another and go steadily forward, plodding along one line of thought in spite of the amplest concessions of the hearer, or wandering from it in endless digression in spite of

his remonstrances. Now, if, as is very certain, no one would envy the madman the glow and originality of his conceptions, why must we extol the cultivation of that intellect, which is the prey, not indeed of barren fancies but of barren facts, of random intrusions from without, though not of morbid imaginations from within? And in thus speaking, I am not denying that a strong and ready memory is in itself a real treasure; I am not disparaging a well-stored mind, though it be nothing besides, provided it be sober, any more than I would despise a bookseller's shop: it is of great value to others, even when not so to the owner. Nor am I banishing, far from it, the possessors of deep and multifarious learning from my ideal University; they adorn it in the eyes of men; I do but say that they constitute no type of the results at which it aims; that it is no great gain to the intellect to have enlarged the memory at the expense of faculties which are indisputably higher.

Nor indeed am I supposing that there is any great danger, at least in this day, of over-education; the danger is on the other side. I will tell you, gentlemen, what has been the practical error of the last twenty years—not to load the memory of the student with a mass of undigested knowledge, but to attempt so much that nothing has been really effected, to teach so many things, that nothing has properly been learned at all. It has been the error of distracting and enfeebling the mind by an unmeaning profusion of subjects; of implying that a smattering in a dozen branches of study was not shallowness, which it really is, but enlargement; of considering an acquaintance with the learned names of things and persons, and the possession of clever duodecimos, and attendance on eloquent lecturers, and membership with scientific institutions, and the sight of the experiments of a platform and the specimens of a museum, that all this was not dissipation of mind, but progress. All things now are to be learned at once, not first one thing, then another, not one well but many badly. Learning is to be without exertion, without attention, without toil; without grounding, without advance, without finishing. There is to be nothing individual in it; and this, forsooth, is the wonder of the age. What the steam-engine does with matter, the printing-press is to do with mind; it is to act mechanically, and the population is to be passively, almost unconsciously enlightened, by the mere multiplication and dissemination of volumes. Whether it be the schoolboy, or the schoolgirl, or the youth at college, or the mechanic in the town, or the politician in the senate, all have been the victims in one way or other of this most preposterous and pernicious of delusions. Wise men have lifted up their voices in vain; and at length, lest their own institutions should be outshone and should disappear in the folly of the hour, they have been obliged, as far as was conscientiously possible, to humour a spirit which they could not withstand, and make temporising concessions at which they could not but inwardly smile.

Now I must guard, gentlemen, against any possible misconception of my meaning. Let me frankly declare then, that I have no fear at all of the education of the people: the more education they have the better, so that it is really education. Next, as to the cheap publication of scientific and literary works,

which is now in vogue, I consider it a great advantage, convenience, and gain; that is, to those to whom education has given a capacity for using them. Further, I consider such innocent recreations as science and literature are able to furnish will be a very fit occupation of the thoughts and the leisure of young persons, and may be made the means of keeping them from bad employments and bad companions. Moreover, as to that superficial acquaintance with chemistry, and geology, and astronomy, and political economy, and modern history, and biography, and other branches of knowledge, which periodical literature and occasional lectures and scientific institutions diffuse through the community, I think it a graceful accomplishment, and a suitable, nay, in this day a necessary accomplishment, in the case of educated men. Nor, lastly, am I disparaging or discouraging the thorough acquisition of any one of these studies, or denying that, as far as it goes, such thorough acquisition is a real education of the mind. All I say is, call things by their right names, and do not confuse together ideas which are essentially different. A thorough knowledge of one science and a superficial acquaintance with many, are not the same thing; a smattering of a hundred things or a memory for detail, is not a philosophical or comprehensive view. Recreations are not education; accomplishments are not education. Do not say, the people must be educated, when, after all, you only mean amused, refreshed, soothed, put into good spirits and good humour, or kept from vicious excesses. I do not say that such amusements, such occupations of mind, are not a great gain; but they are not education. You may as well call drawing and fencing education, as a general knowledge of botany or conchology. Stuffing birds or playing stringed instruments is an elegant pastime, and a resource to the idle, but it is not education; it does not form or cultivate the intellect. Education is a high word; it is the preparation for knowledge, and it is the imparting of knowledge in proportion to that preparation. We require intellectual eyes to know withal, as bodily eyes for sight. We need both objects and organs intellectual; we cannot gain them without setting about it; we cannot gain them in our sleep or by haphazard. The best telescope does not dispense with eyes; the printing-press or the lecture room will assist us greatly, but we must be true to ourselves, we must be parties in the work. A University is, according to the usual designation, an Alma Mater, knowing her children one by one, not a foundry, or a mint, or a treadmill.

I protest to you, gentlemen, that if I had to choose between a so-called University which dispensed with residence and tutorial superintendence, and gave its degrees to any person who passed an examination in a wide range of subjects, and a University which had no professors or examinations at all, but merely brought a number of young men together for three or four years, and then sent them away as the University of Oxford is said to have done some sixty years since, if I were asked which of these two methods was the better discipline of the intellect—mind, I do not say which is *morally* the better, for it is plain that compulsory study must be a good and idleness an intolerable mischief—but if I must determine which of the two courses was the more

successful in training, moulding, enlarging the mind, which sent out men the more fitted for their secular duties, which produced better public men, men of the world, men whose names would descend to posterity, I have no hesitation in giving the preference to that University which did nothing, over that which exacted of its members an acquaintance with every science under the sun. And, paradox as this may seem, still if results be the test of systems, the influence of the public schools and colleges of England, in the course of the last century, at least will bear out one side of the contrast as I have drawn it. What would come, on the other hand, of the ideal systems of education which have fascinated the imagination of this age, could they ever take effect, and whether they would not produce a generation frivolous, narrow-minded, and resourceless, intellectually considered, is a fair subject for debate; but so far is certain, that the Universities and scholastic establishments to which I refer, and which did little more than bring together first boys and then youths in large numbers, these institutions, with miserable deformities on the side of morals, with a hollow profession of Christianity, and a heathen code of ethics—I say, at least they can boast of a succession of heroes and statesmen, of literary men and philosophers, of men conspicuous for great natural virtues, for habits of business, for knowledge of life, for practical judgment, or cultivated tastes, for accomplishments, who have made England what it is—able to subdue the earth, able to domineer over Catholics.

How is this to be explained? I suppose as follows: When a multitude of young persons, keen, open-hearted, sympathetic, and observant, as young persons are, come together and freely mix with each other, they are sure to learn one from another, even if there be no one to teach them; the conversation of all is a series of lectures to each, and they gain for themselves new ideas and views, fresh matter of thought, and distinct principles for judging and acting, day by day. An infant has to learn the meaning of the information which its senses convey to it, and this seems to be its employment. It fancies all that the eye presents to it to be close to it, till it actually learns the contrary, and thus by practice does it ascertain the relations and uses of those first elements of knowledge which are necessary for its animal existence. A parallel teaching is necessary for our social being, and it is secured by a large school or a college; and this effect may be fairly called in its own department an enlargement of mind. It is seeing the world on a small field with little trouble; for the pupils or students come from very different places, and with widely different notions, and there is much to generalise, much to adjust, much to eliminate, there are inter-relations to be defined, and conventional rules to be established, in the process, by which the whole assemblage is moulded together, and gains one tone and one character. Let it be clearly understood, I repeat it, that I am not taking into account moral or religious considerations; I am but saying that that youthful community will constitute a whole, it will embody a specific idea, it will represent a doctrine, it will administer a code of conduct, and it will furnish principles of thought and action. It will give birth to a living teaching, which in course of time will take the shape of a self-perpetuating tradition, or a *genius*

loci, as it is sometimes called; which haunts the home where it has been born, and which imbues and forms, more or less, and one by one, every individual who is successively brought under its shadow. Thus it is that, independent of direct instruction on the part of Superiors, there is a sort of self-education in the academic institutions of Protestant England; a characteristic tone of thought, a recognised standard of judgment is found in them, which, as developed in the individual who is submitted to it, becomes a twofold source of strength to him, both from the distinct stamp it impresses on his mind, and from the bond of union which it creates between him and others—effects which are shared by the authorities of the place, for they themselves have been educated in it, and at all times are exposed to the influence of its moral atmosphere. Here then is a real teaching, whatever be its standards and principles, true or false; and it at least tends towards cultivation of the intellect; it at least recognises that knowledge is something more than a sort of passive reception of scraps and details; it is a something, and it does a something, which never will issue from the most strenuous efforts of a set of teachers, with no mutual sympathies and no intercommunion, of a set of examiners with no opinions which they dare profess, and with no common principles, who are teaching or questioning a set of youths who do not know them, and do not know each other, on a large number of subjects, different in kind, and connected by no wide philosophy, three times a week, or three times a year, or once in three years, in chill lecture-rooms or on a pompous anniversary.

Nay, self-education in any shape, in the most restricted sense, is preferable to a system of teaching which, professing so much, really does so little for the mind. Shut your College gates against the votary of knowledge, throw him back upon the searchings and the efforts of his own mind; he will gain by being spared an entrance into your Babel. Few indeed there are who can dispense with the stimulus and support of instructors, or will do anything at all, if left to themselves. And fewer still (though such great minds are to be found) who will not, from such unassisted attempts, contract a self-reliance and a self-esteem, which are not only moral evils, but serious hindrances to the attainment of truth. And next to none, perhaps, or none, who will not be reminded from time to time of the disadvantage under which they lie, by their imperfect grounding, by the breaks, deficiencies, and irregularities of their knowledge, by the eccentricity of opinion and the confusion of principle which they exhibit. They will be too often ignorant of what every one knows and takes for granted, of that multitude of small truths which fall upon the mind like dust, impalpable and ever accumulating; they may be unable to converse, they may argue perversely, they may pride themselves on their worst paradoxes or their grossest truisms, they may be full of their own mode of viewing things, unwilling to be put out of their way, slow to enter into the minds of others,—but, with these and whatever other liabilities upon their heads, they are likely to have more thought, more mind, more philosophy, more true enlargement, than those earnest but ill-used persons who are forced to load their minds with a score of subjects against an examination, who have too much

on their hands to indulge themselves in thinking or investigation, who devour premiss and conclusion together with indiscriminate greediness, who hold whole sciences on faith, and commit demonstrations to memory, and who too often, as might be expected, when their period of education is passed, throw up all they have learned in disgust, having gained nothing really by their anxious labours, except perhaps the habit of application.

Yet such is the better specimen of the fruit of that ambitious system which has of late years been making way among us: for its result on ordinary minds, and on the common run of students, is less satisfactory still; they leave their place of education simply dissipated and relaxed by the multiplicity of subjects, which they have never really mastered, and so shallow as not even to know their shallowness. How much better, I say, is it for the active and thoughtful intellect, where such is to be found, to eschew the College and the University altogether, than to submit to a drudgery so ignoble, a mockery so contumelious! How much more profitable for the independent mind, after the mere rudiments of education, to range through a library at random, taking down books as they meet him, and pursuing the trains of thought which his mother wit suggests! How much healthier to wander into the fields, and there with the exiled Prince to find "tongues in the trees, books in the running brooks!" How much more genuine an education is that of the poor boy in the Poem ¹—a Poem, whether in conception or in execution, one of the most touching in our language—who, not in the wide world, but ranging day by day around his widowed mother's home, "a dexterous gleaner" in a narrow field, and with only such slender outfit

"as the village school and books a few
Supplied,"

contrived from the beach, and the quay, and the fisher's boat, and the inn's fireside, and the tradesman's shop, and the shepherd's walk, and the smuggler's hut, and the mossy moor, and the screaming gulls, and the restless waves, to fashion for himself a philosophy and a poetry of his own!

FOUR KINDS OF THINKING ²

by James Harvey Robinson

WE do not think enough about thinking, and much of our confusion is the result of current illusions in regard to it. Let us forget for the moment any impressions we may have derived from the philosophers, and see what seems to happen in ourselves. The first thing that we notice is that our thought moves with such incredible rapidity that it

¹ Crabbe's *Tales of the Hall*.

² From *The Mind in the Making*. Copyright, by Harper and Brothers, publishers.

is almost impossible to arrest any specimen of it long enough to have a look at it. When we are offered a penny for our thoughts we always find that we have recently had so many things in mind that we can easily make a selection which will not compromise us too nakedly. On inspection we shall find that even if we are not downright ashamed of a great part of our spontaneous thinking it is far too intimate, personal, ignoble or trivial to permit us to reveal more than a small part of it. I believe this must be true of everyone. We do not, of course, know what goes on in other people's heads. They tell us very little and we tell them very little. The spigot of speech, rarely fully opened, could never emit more than dribblets of the ever renewed hogshead of thought—*noch grosser wie's Heidelberger Fass*. We find it hard to believe that other people's thoughts are as silly as our own, but they probably are.

We all appear to ourselves to be thinking all the time during our waking hours, and most of us are aware that we go on thinking while we are asleep, even more foolishly than when awake. When uninterrupted by some practical issue we are engaged in what is now known as a *reverie*. This is our spontaneous and favorite kind of thinking. We allow our ideas to take their own course and this course is determined by our hopes and fears, our spontaneous desires, their fulfillment or frustration; by our likes and dislikes, our loves and hates and resentments. There is nothing else anything like so interesting to ourselves as ourselves. All thought that is not more or less laboriously controlled and directed will inevitably circle about the beloved Ego. It is amusing and pathetic to observe this tendency in ourselves and in others. We learn politely and generously to overlook this truth, but if we dare to think of it, it blazes forth like the noontide sun.

The reverie or "free association of ideas" has of late become the subject of scientific research. While investigators are not yet agreed on the results, or at least on the proper interpretation to be given to them, there can be no doubt that our reveries form the chief index to our fundamental character. They are a reflection of our nature as modified by often hidden and forgotten experiences. We need not go into the matter further here, for it is only necessary to observe that the reverie is at all times a potent and in many cases an omnipotent rival to every other kind of thinking. It doubtless influences all our speculations in its persistent tendency to self-magnification and self-justification, which are its chief preoccupations, but it is the last thing to make directly or indirectly for honest increase of knowledge. Philosophers usually talk as if such thinking did not exist or were in some way negligible. This is what makes their speculations so unreal and often worthless.

The reverie, as any of us can see for himself, is frequently broken and interrupted by the necessity of a second kind of thinking. We have to make practical decisions. Shall we write a letter or no? Shall we take the subway or a bus? Shall we have dinner at seven or half past? Shall we buy U. S. Rubber or a Liberty Bond? Decisions are easily distinguishable from the free flow of the reverie. Sometimes they demand a good deal of careful

pondering and the recollection of pertinent facts; often, however, they are made impulsively. They are a more difficult and laborious thing than the reverie, and we resent having to "make up our mind" when we are tired, or absorbed in a congenial reverie. Weighing a decision, it should be noted, does not necessarily add anything to our knowledge, although we may, of course, seek further information before making it.

A third kind of thinking is stimulated when anyone questions our beliefs and opinions. We sometimes find ourselves changing our minds without any resistance or heavy emotion, but if we are told that we are wrong we resent the imputation and harden our hearts. We are incredibly heedless in the formation of our beliefs, but find ourselves filled with an illicit passion for them when anyone proposes to rob us of their companionship. It is obviously not the ideas themselves that are dear to us, but our self-esteem, which is threatened. We are by nature stubbornly pledged to defend our own from attack, whether it be our person, our family, our property, or our opinion. A United States Senator once remarked to a friend of mine that God Almighty could not make him change his mind on our Latin-American policy. We may surrender, but rarely confess ourselves vanquished. In the intellectual world at least peace is without victory.

Few of us take the pains to study the origin of our cherished convictions; indeed, we have a natural repugnance to so doing. We like to continue to believe what we have been accustomed to accept as true, and the resentment aroused when doubt is cast upon any of our assumptions leads us to seek every manner of excuse for clinging to them. *The result is that most of our so-called reasoning consists in finding arguments for going on believing as we already do.*

I remember years ago attending a public dinner to which the Governor of the state was bidden. The chairman explained that His Excellency could not be present for certain "good" reasons; what the "real" reasons were the presiding officer said he would leave us to conjecture. This distinction between "good" and "real" reasons is one of the most clarifying and essential in the whole realm of thought. We can readily give what seem to us "good" reasons for being a Catholic or a Mason, a Republican or a Democrat, an adherent or opponent of the League of Nations. But the "real" reasons are usually on quite a different plane. Of course the importance of this distinction is popularly, if somewhat obscurely, recognized. The Baptist missionary is ready enough to see that the Buddhist is not such because his doctrines would bear careful inspection, but because he happened to be born in a Buddhist family in Tokio. But it would be treason to his faith to acknowledge that his own partiality for certain doctrines is due to the fact that his mother was a member of the First Baptist church of Oak Ridge. A savage can give all sorts of reasons for his belief that it is dangerous to step on a man's shadow, and a newspaper editor can advance plenty of arguments against the Bolsheviki.

But neither of them may realize why he happens to be defending his particular opinion.

The "real" reasons for our beliefs are concealed from ourselves as well as from others. As we grow up we simply adopt the ideas presented to us in regard to such matters as religion, family relations, property, business, our country, and the state. We unconsciously absorb them from our environment. They are persistently whispered in our ear by the group in which we happen to live. Moreover, as Mr. Trotter has pointed out, these judgments, being the product of suggestion and not of reasoning, have the quality of perfect obviousness, so that to question them

. . . is to the believer to carry skepticism to an insane degree, and will be met by contempt, disapproval, or condemnation, according to the nature of the belief in question. When, therefore, we find ourselves entertaining an opinion about the basis of which there is a quality of feeling which tells us that to inquire into it would be absurd, obviously unnecessary, unprofitable, undesirable, bad form, or wicked, we may know that that opinion is a nonrational one, and probably, therefore, founded upon inadequate evidence.

Opinions, on the other hand, which are the result of experience or of honest reasoning do not have this quality of "primary certitude." I remember when as a youth I heard a group of business men discussing the question of the immortality of the soul, I was outraged by the sentiment of doubt expressed by one of the party. As I look back now I see that I had at the time no interest in the matter, and certainly no least argument to urge in favor of the belief in which I had been reared. But neither my personal indifference to the issue, nor the fact that I had previously given it no attention, served to prevent an angry resentment when I heard *my* ideas questioned.

This spontaneous and loyal support of our preconceptions—this process of finding "good" reasons to justify our routine beliefs—is known to modern psychologists as "rationalizing"—clearly only a new name for a very ancient thing. Our "good" reasons ordinarily have no value in promoting honest enlightenment, because, no matter how solemnly they may be marshaled, they are at bottom the result of personal preference or prejudice, and not of an honest desire to seek or accept new knowledge.

In our reveries we are frequently engaged in self-justification, for we cannot bear to think ourselves wrong, and yet have constant illustrations of our weaknesses and mistakes. So we spend much time finding fault with circumstances and the conduct of others, and shifting on to them with great ingenuity the onus of our own failures and disappointments. *Rationalizing is the self-exculpation which occurs when we feel ourselves, or our group, accused of misapprehension or error.*

The little word *my* is the most important one in all human affairs, and properly to reckon with it is the beginning of wisdom. It has the same force whether it is *my* dinner, *my* dog, and *my* house, or *my* faith, *my* country, and *my* God. We not only resent the imputation that our watch is wrong, or our car shabby, but that our conception of the canals of Mars, of the pronunciation

of "Epictetus," of the medicinal value of salicine, or the date of Sargon I, are subject to revision.

Philosophers, scholars, and men of science exhibit a common sensitiveness in all decisions in which their *amour propre* is involved. Thousands of argumentative works have been written to vent a grudge. However stately their reasoning, it may be nothing but rationalizing, stimulated by the most commonplace of all motives. A history of philosophy and theology could be written in terms of grouches, wounded pride, and aversions, and it would be far more instructive than the usual treatments of these themes. Sometimes, under Providence, the lowly impulse of resentment leads to great achievements. Milton wrote his treatise on divorce as a result of his troubles with his seventeen-year-old wife, and when he was accused of being the leading spirit in a new sect, the Divorcers, he wrote his noble *Areopagitica* to prove his right to say what he thought fit, and incidentally to establish the advantage of a free press in the promotion of Truth.

All mankind, high and low, thinks in all the ways which have been described. The reverie goes on all the time not only in the mind of the mill hand and the Broadway flapper, but equally in weighty judges and godly bishops. It has gone on in all the philosophers, scientists, poets, and theologians that have ever lived. Aristotle's most abstruse speculations were doubtless tempered by highly irrelevant reflections. He is reported to have had very thin legs and small eyes, for which he doubtless had to find excuses, and he was wont to indulge in very conspicuous dress and rings and was accustomed to arrange his hair carefully. Diogenes the Cynic exhibited the impudence of a touchy soul. His tub was his distinction. Tennyson in beginning his *Maud* could not forget his chagrin over losing his patrimony years before as the result of an unhappy investment in the Patent Decorative Carving Company. These facts are not recalled here as a gratuitous disparagement of the truly great, but to insure a full realization of the tremendous competition which all really exacting thought has to face, even in the minds of the most highly endowed mortals.

And now the astonishing and perturbing suspicion emerges that perhaps almost all that has passed for social science, political economy, politics, and ethics in the past may be brushed aside by future generations as mainly rationalizing. John Dewey has already reached this conclusion in regard to philosophy. Veblen and other writers have revealed the various unperceived presuppositions of the traditional political economy, and now comes an Italian sociologist, Vilfredo Pareto, who, in his huge treatise on general sociology, devotes hundreds of pages to substantiating a similar thesis affecting all the social sciences. This conclusion may be ranked by students of a hundred years hence as one of the several great discoveries of our age. It is by no means fully worked out, and it is so opposed to nature that it will be very slowly accepted by the great mass of those who consider themselves thoughtful. As a historical student I am personally fully reconciled to this

newer view. Indeed, it seems to me inevitable that just as the various sciences of nature were, before the opening of the seventeenth century, largely masses of rationalizations to suit the religious sentiments of the period, so the social sciences have continued even to our own day to be rationalizations of uncritically accepted beliefs and customs.

It will become apparent as we proceed that the fact that an idea is ancient and that it has been widely received is no argument in its favor, but should immediately suggest the necessity of carefully testing it as a probable instance of rationalization.

This brings us to another kind of thought which can fairly easily be distinguished from the three kinds described above. It has not the usual qualities of the reverie, for it does not hover about our personal complacencies and humiliations. It is not made up of the homely decisions forced upon us by everyday needs, when we review our little stock of existing information, consult our conventional preferences and obligations, and make a choice of action. It is not the defense of our own cherished beliefs and prejudices just because they are our own—mere plausible excuses for remaining of the same mind. On the contrary, it is that peculiar species of thought which leads us to *change* our mind.

It is this kind of thought that has raised man from his pristine, subsavage ignorance and squalor to the degree of knowledge and comfort which he now possesses. On his capacity to continue and greatly extend this kind of thinking depends his chance of groping his way out of the plight in which the most highly civilized peoples of the world now find themselves. In the past this type of thinking has been called Reason. But so many misapprehensions have grown up around the word that some of us have become very suspicious of it. I suggest, therefore, that we substitute a recent name and speak of "creative thought" rather than of Reason. *For this kind of meditation begets knowledge, and knowledge is really creative inasmuch as it makes things look different from what they seemed before and may indeed work for their reconstruction.*

In certain moods some of us realize that we are observing things or making reflections with a seeming disregard of our personal preoccupations. We are not preening or defending ourselves; we are not faced by the necessity of any practical decision, nor are we apologizing for believing this or that. We are just wondering and looking and mayhap seeing what we never perceived before.

Curiosity is as clear and definite as any of our urges. We wonder what is in a sealed telegram or in a letter in which some one else is absorbed, or what is being said in the telephone booth or in low conversation. This inquisitiveness is vastly stimulated by jealousy, suspicion, or any hint that we ourselves are directly or indirectly involved. But there appears to be a fair amount of personal interest in other people's affairs even when they do not concern us except as a mystery to be unraveled or a tale to be told. The reports of a

divorce suit will have "news value" for many weeks. They constitute a story, like a novel or play or moving picture. This is not an example of pure curiosity, however, since we readily identify ourselves with others, and their joys and despair then become our own.

We also take note of, or "observe," as Sherlock Holmes says, things which have nothing to do with our personal interests and make no personal appeal either direct or by way of sympathy. This is what Veblen so well calls "idle curiosity." And it is usually idle enough. Some of us when we face the line of people opposite us in a subway train impulsively consider them in detail and engage in rapid inferences and form theories in regard to them. On entering a room there are those who will perceive at a glance the degree of preciousness of the rugs, the character of the pictures, and the personality revealed by the books. But there are many, it would seem, who are so absorbed in their personal reverie or in some definite purpose that they have no bright-eyed energy for idle curiosity. The tendency to miscellaneous observation we come by honestly enough, for we note it in many of our animal relatives.

Veblen, however, uses the term "idle curiosity" somewhat ironically, as is his wont. It is idle only to those who fail to realize that it may be a very rare and indispensable thing from which almost all distinguished human achievement proceeds. Since it may lead to systematic examination and seeking for things hitherto undiscovered. For research is but diligent search which enjoys the high flavor of primitive hunting. Occasionally and fitfully idle curiosity thus leads to creative thought, which alters and broadens our own views and aspirations and may in turn, under highly favorable circumstances, affect the views and lives of others, even for generations to follow. An example or two will make this unique human process clear.

Galileo was a thoughtful youth and doubtless carried on a rich and varied reverie. He had artistic ability and might have turned out to be a musician or painter. When he had dwelt among the monks at Vallombrosa he had been tempted to lead the life of a religious. As a boy he busied himself with toy machines and he inherited a fondness for mathematics. All these facts are of record. We may safely assume also that, along with many other subjects of contemplation, the Pisan maidens found a vivid place in his thoughts.

One day when seventeen years old he wandered into the cathedral of his native town. In the midst of his reverie he looked up at the lamps hanging by long chains from the high ceiling of the church. Then something very difficult to explain occurred. He found himself no longer thinking of the building, worshipers, or the services; of his artistic or religious interests; of his reluctance to become a physician as his father wished. He forgot the question of a career and even the *graziosissime donne*. As he watched the swinging lamps he was suddenly wondering if mayhap their oscillations, whether long or short, did not occupy the same time. Then he tested this hypothesis by counting his pulse, for that was the only timepiece he had with him.

This observation, however remarkable in itself, was not enough to produce a really creative thought. Others may have noticed the same thing and yet nothing came of it. Most of our observations have no assignable results. Galileo may have seen that the warts on a peasant's face formed a perfect isosceles triangle, or he may have noticed with boyish glee that just as the officiating priest was uttering the solemn words, *ecce agnus Dei*, a fly lit on the end of his nose. To be really creative, ideas have to be worked up and then "put over," so that they become a part of man's social heritage. The highly accurate pendulum clock was one of the later results of Galileo's discovery. He himself was led to reconsider and successfully to refute the old notions of falling bodies. It remained for Newton to prove that the moon was falling, and presumably all the heavenly bodies. This quite upset all the consecrated views of the heavens as managed by angelic engineers. The universality of the laws of gravitation stimulated the attempt to seek other and equally important natural laws and cast grave doubts on the miracles in which mankind had hitherto believed. In short, those who dared to include in their thoughts the discoveries of Galileo and his successors found themselves in a new earth surrounded by new heavens.

On the 28th of October, 1831, three hundred and fifty years after Galileo had noticed the isochronous vibrations of the lamps, creative thought and its currency had so far increased that Faraday was wondering what would happen if he mounted a disk of copper between the poles of a horseshoe magnet. As the disk revolved an electric current was produced. This would doubtless have seemed the idlest kind of an experiment to the stanch business men of the time, who, it happened, were just then denouncing the child-labor bills in their anxiety to avail themselves to the full of the results of earlier idle curiosity. But should the dynamos and motors which have come into being as the outcome of Faraday's experiment be stopped this evening, the business man of to-day, agitated over labor troubles, might, as he trudged home past lines of "dead" cars, through dark streets to an unlighted house, engage in a little creative thought of his own and perceive that he and his laborers would have no modern factories and mines to quarrel about had it not been for the strange practical effects of the idle curiosity of scientists, inventors, and engineers.

The examples of creative intelligence given above belong to the realm of modern scientific achievement, which furnishes the most striking instances of the effects of scrupulous, objective thinking. But there are, of course, other great realms in which the recording and embodiment of acute observation and insight have wrought themselves into the higher life of man. The great poets and dramatists and our modern story-tellers have found themselves engaged in productive reveries, noting and artistically presenting their discoveries for the delight and instruction of those who have the ability to appreciate them.

The process by which a fresh and original poem or drama comes into being is doubtless analogous to that which originates and elaborates so-called

scientific discoveries; but there is clearly a temperamental difference. The genesis and advance of painting, sculpture, and music offer still other problems. We really as yet know shockingly little about these matters, and indeed very few people have the least curiosity about them. Nevertheless, creative intelligence in its various forms and activities is what makes man. Were it not for its slow, painful, and constantly discouraged operations through the ages man would be no more than a species of primate living on seeds, fruit, roots, and uncooked flesh, and wandering naked through the woods and over the plains like a chimpanzee.

The origin and progress and future promotion of civilization are ill understood and misconceived. These should be made the chief theme of education, but much hard work is necessary before we can reconstruct our ideas of man and his capacities and free ourselves from innumerable persistent misapprehensions. There have been obstructionists in all times, not merely the lethargic masses, but the moralists, the rationalizing theologians, and most of the philosophers, all busily if unconsciously engaged in ratifying existing ignorance and mistakes and discouraging creative thought. Naturally, those who reassure us seem worthy of honor and respect. Equally naturally those who puzzle us with disturbing criticisms and invite us to change our ways are objects of suspicion and readily discredited. Our personal discontent does not ordinarily extend to any critical questioning of the general situation in which we find ourselves. In every age the prevailing conditions of civilization have appeared quite natural and inevitable to those who grew up in them. The cow asks no questions as to how it happens to have a dry stall and a supply of hay. The kitten laps its warm milk from a china saucer, without knowing anything about porcelain; the dog nestles in the corner of a divan with no sense of obligation to the inventors of upholstery and the manufacturers of down pillows. So we humans accept our breakfasts, our trains and telephones and orchestras and movies, our national Constitution, our moral code and standards of manners, with the simplicity and innocence of a pet rabbit. We have absolutely inexhaustible capacities for appropriating what others do for us with no thought of a "thank you." We do not feel called upon to make any least contribution to the merry game ourselves. Indeed, we are usually quite unaware that a game is being played at all.

THE AVERAGE AMERICAN AS A
THINKER¹

by Harold Callender

"In that direction," said the Cheshire Cat, waving its right paw round, "lives a Hatter: and in that direction," waving the other paw, "lives a March Hare. Visit either you like: they're both mad."

"But I don't want to go among mad people," Alice remarked.

"Oh, you can't help that," said the Cat. "We're all mad here. I'm mad. You're mad."—From "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland."

It's this way," said the Hatter, pouring himself a second cup of tea. "Our farmers produce too much wheat, our factories too many manufactured articles, our machinists too many machines. We're so efficient that we're miserable. Surely you understand that?"

"I'm afraid I don't," said Alice. "For if there's plenty of food and other things, everybody should be comfortable."

"Prices have dropped terribly," continued the Hatter. "That's what depresses us so."

"That's no reason to be depressed," said Alice. "I thought people complained when prices were high; so if they're low you should all be happy."

"No," said the Hatter. "We produce so well with machinery that we have less and less need of labor. So the workman can't earn wages and can't buy goods, and the things the factories make can't be sold."

("Then what's the good of making them?" wondered Alice.)

"We are very thrifty," the Hatter went on. "We save and pile up capital with which we build more and more factories, which become more and more efficient. The more efficient they get the more they produce and the fewer men they employ. So their products glut the markets and their machines create unemployment. We put so much capital into making goods that the consumer hasn't enough money to buy the goods when they are made."

"Oh dear!" said Alice. "Doesn't anybody know what to do about it?"

"There are economists," said the Hatter, "who have seen what was happening and warned us. But they are only scholars who lecture and write books. The practical men who run things have no use for the academic mind. But they know the value of the boll weevil."

"What is it good for?"

"It eats up the cotton crop and keeps prices from falling," explained the

¹ By permission of the New York Times.

Hatter. "Were it not for the boll weevil we should have magnificent crops, and then the South would be ruined."

"And do you keep a supply of boll weevils for such emergencies?" asked Alice.

"They seem to have plenty in the South," said the Hatter.

"But what about the poor North which has too many factories: couldn't your boll weevil eat up some factories, too?"

"No," said the Hatter disdainfully. "Besides, we protect our factories with a tariff."

"Oh, I see!" exclaimed Alice. "Your tariff helps to sell the goods the factories make, doesn't it?"

"Not at all," returned the Hatter severely. "The tariff checks trade by closing markets. We close our markets against other countries; they close their markets against us. Each nation, you see, seeks a favorable balance of trade—that is, it tries to sell more than it buys. Each wants to buy less and less from the others, and sell more and more to the others."

"But what one nation sells another must buy," said Alice. She felt very sure of that.

"Exactly," admitted the Hatter.

"Then how can they all buy less and sell more at the same time?"

"They can't," said the Hatter. "They just destroy one another's trade and add to one another's suffering."

"But why don't they help one another instead?" asked Alice.

"That," said the Hatter, "is just what they don't want to do. Each nation wants to do without the help of the others. Each wants to be self-sufficing, because if there were a war the nation that could manage with the least imports would have an advantage."

"I hope there's no danger of war," said Alice.

"We have many treaties to insure peace—the League of Nations covenant, the Locarno treaties, the Kellogg Pact, arbitration treaties without number," said the Hatter.

"Oh good!" said Alice with relief. "Then nobody is afraid of war and nobody arms."

"On the contrary," said the Hatter. "Everybody is afraid and everybody arms. We are more heavily armed than when the last war started."

"How very strange," said Alice, though she did not want to seem impolite.

"No," said the Hatter. "For nobody has confidence in the treaties. Each knows that he will keep them, but he isn't so sure about his neighbors."

"Then what's the good of making treaties?" asked Alice.

"Take another cup of tea," said the Hatter.

Alice could not make it out. "Perhaps," she thought, "If I ate another bite of the right side of the mushroom, whichever side it is, I might grow bigger and understand."

"Tell her the story of reparations," said the Dormouse, waking up and rubbing his eyes. "For that's what has caused the most trouble."

"The Germans were obliged to rebuild what had been destroyed in the war," began the Hatter. "That was because they lost the war——"

"I suppose they sent workmen and materials and repaired the damages," interrupted Alice.

"Don't make foolish remarks," said the Hatter. "They were allowed to do no such thing. For that would have deprived French builders of contracts and French workmen of jobs."

"Then the Germans paid to have it done?"

"That was impossible. They didn't have enough money or gold, and if they had had enough they could not have handed it over without upsetting currencies. The only way they could pay was in goods. But the creditors didn't want German goods and put up tariffs against them."

"Then how did they get paid?" asked Alice.

"They lent Germany money with which to pay. Then she had so much capital that she made her factories more and more efficient and produced more goods and employed less labor—just like the rest of us. Now, of course, she can't pay."

"Why not, if she has so much capital?" asked Alice.

"That's just the reason," said the Hatter. "She has borrowed so much that she's broke. She has such fine factories and such skilled workmen that she is helpless and her people are miserable."

"Is Germany efficient, too?" asked Alice.

"Very efficient indeed," replied the Hatter.

"If reparations are bad, why don't you abolish them?" asked Alice.

"That can't be done," said the Hatter, "because France won't agree and because the Allies must get reparations from Germany in order to pay their debts to America. These debts, too, must be paid in money from the sale of goods. But America had raised her tariff so as to limit the amount of goods she receives."

"Then how are the debts to be paid?"

"Nobody expects they will be paid," said the Hatter. "Yet we must act as though we thought they would be paid. One difficulty is that the debts change from year to year; so that the debtors must pay, not the amounts they borrowed, but much larger amounts."

"How can that be?" asked Alice.

"The debts are payable in gold, which varies in value. Actually the borrowers received, not gold but goods, the prices of which were then very high. And what they pay back is not gold, but goods. But the prices of those goods have fallen; so in order to settle their gold debt the borrowers have to pay back about 50 per cent more than they borrowed!"

"Is that a good thing for America?" asked Alice.

"No, indeed," said the Hatter. "It prevents America from selling her goods because it prolongs the depression."

"Why were the debts allowed to change like that?" asked Alice.

"Nobody thought about it until it happened—excepting a few theorists who didn't count," said the Hatter. "When the Dawes Plan for reparations was drawn up an academic gentleman put in a clause providing that when the value of gold varied more than 10 per cent the payments should be reconsidered. This was regarded as a harmless whim and the clause was left in. When the Young Plan replaced the Dawes Plan this clause was not put in, partly because the Young Plan payments covered the debts payments to America, which had so much safeguard."

Alice sighed and wondered whether anything ever would happen in a reasonable way again.

"Why do the French want reparations to go on?" she asked.

"They say a contract is sacred and must be carried out," replied the Hatter.

"Are the American debt contracts sacred, too?"

"To America, yes," said the Hatter. "France also wants to prevent Germany from becoming strong again, for then she might insist upon revising the peace treaties."

"And what do the Germans say to that?"

"They say they want very much to become strong again and to revise the treaties, and they ask France kindly to disarm and to become weak so they may do it."

"What do the British want?"

"They want Germany to become strong so she can pay back what the London bankers lent her and so she can buy more British goods. But they don't want to offend France, who is strong already."

"So nobody can do anything?" asked Alice.

"Well, nobody has done much," answered the Hatter.

"But isn't it important to do something?" urged Alice.

"Of course. It is extremely important. Everybody knows that," said the Hatter.

Then Alice remembered what the Cheshire cat had said.

EXIT THE GOSPEL OF WORK¹

by Henry Pratt Fairchild

THE Gospel of Work! How familiarly its slogans ring in our ears: "If any would not work, neither should he eat." "For Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do." "In work that keeps faith sweet and strong." "The right to work."

¹ From *Harper's Magazine*. By permission of the author. Copyright, 1931, by Harper & Brothers.

From time immemorial work has been glorified. Song and story yield their homage to the solid merits of work, however romantically they may extol the delights of indolence, while essay and biography axiomatically acclaim work as the sure means to personal success and social esteem. The more prosaic and academic discussions of contemporary life, in their exaltation of work as the great social panacea, do but reecho the words of Carlyle, who describes it as "the grand cure of all the maladies and miseries that ever beset mankind." The Rotarian mind makes work co-equal, if not identical, with service. Nowhere has this doctrine been better summed up than in the words of that past master of pious platitudes, Calvin Coolidge: "To provide for the economic well-being of our inhabitants, only three attributes, which are not beyond the reach of the average person, are necessary—honesty, industry, and thrift." (Oh, if it were only so simple!)

Yet in this year of unemployment, nineteen hundred and thirty-one, the one word that is on every expositor's tongue is "Overproduction." It is overproduction that is the cause of the business depression, of unemployment, of the collapse of the stock market, of international friction—industrial overproduction, agricultural overproduction, overproduction of everything in general. Shades of the Classical Economists! What has become of the elaborate argument that they were so learnedly developing scarcely a century ago proving that general overproduction is an impossibility, and which is still the stock in trade of most of the teachers of conventional economics today?

Now when you look at it squarely, what is overproduction but the tangible consequence of too much work? Here is surely a rare paradox. Work the great panacea, overproduction the besetting malady. Yet the characteristic features of the disease are the logical result of the remedy. There must be something wrong with this picture.

The simple fact is, that the current social concept of work and the usual personal attitude toward it are two items in our traditional impedimenta which must be completely revolutionized to fit the conditions of modern times. "Honesty, industry, and thrift" have had a long and honorable career and have rendered yeoman service in the evolution of human welfare. Doubtless, honesty is still a serviceable virtue, where it can be found. But industry and thrift have outlived their pristine usefulness, and ought to be put on part time.

For about 999,950 years the chief preoccupation of man has been getting a living. The bare task of keeping soul and body together, and providing himself with a few simple comforts and an occasional modest luxury or two, has engrossed his entire time and energy. The one imperious demand that Nature made of him was work. There was a direct and conspicuous relationship between the amount of work he did and his chance of survival, not to speak of any positive enjoyment or contentment. Society needed the full output of productive energy of every one of its adult members, however unevenly the product of that energy may have been distributed. Starvation was never far from the lower classes, want from the middle groups, or privation from

the privileged. Famine was something more than a remote possibility. During this long period the utility of work was so great that reverence for it became so thoroughly ingrained in human nature as to seem almost instinctive, and social sanctions in favor of work were developed of the most imperious character.

Now, within the last fifty years, man suddenly finds himself possessed of a productive mechanism so capacious and competent that if he expends his habitual amount of work on it it will swamp him with more goods than he has the ability to grapple with. No wonder many of his traditional values seem all awry! No wonder he stands trembling, bemused, awestruck before his own devices, the wise use of which defies his intelligence, the power of which far outstrips his ability to control.

In June, 1918, Mr. H. L. Gantt, one of the foremost efficiency engineers this country has ever known, said, "On the whole, only about fifty per cent of our industrial machines are actually operating during the time they are expected to operate, and on the whole these machines, during the time they are being operated, are producing only about fifty per cent of what they are expected to produce. This brings our productive result down to about one-fourth of what it might be if the machines were run all of the time at their highest capacity."

This was during war time. Millions of men were engaged in military (largely wealth-destroying) activities, and other millions of workers were occupied in extraordinary lines of production necessitated by the military situation. Yet in spite of these handicaps, the operation of our machines at one-fourth capacity resulted in such accumulations of goods that they were an embarrassment to government officials for years after peace was restored. It is quite a conservative estimate that if all our productive plant were operated at its maximum efficiency we could turn out more goods than we now know how to dispose of wisely with an average working day for all the available labor of not more than four hours.

In brief, we have achieved a New Freedom beside which the paltry emancipation usually referred to by that term is trivial and insignificant—the Freedom from the incessant task of making a living, the Freedom to *live*. But we have not yet learned what to do with it. We keep on working because we don't know how to stop.

One factor that hampers our readjustment to the new situation, and which is itself a consequence of our age-long subjection to work, is an extraordinary inversion in our conception of production and consumption. The origin of this is natural enough. As primitive man, gradually emerging from the shadows of savagery, began to catch a vision of the capacity of material things to gratify human wants, he became acutely conscious of the fact that one great limitation to his enjoyment was his meager ability to produce these devices. He learned by experience that the surest way to enlarge his equipment for happiness was to improve his productive technic. Thus he came to regard increased production as an end in itself because the results of production were

so easily taken for granted. He did not perceive that there was a necessary and natural limit to the principle. Consequently, when the Industrial Revolution came along, with its unprecedented expansion of productive capacity, instead of causing mankind to turn its attention to the ultimate ends and purposes of production, it raised the adulation of production to the nth degree. Western society became completely hypnotized by its new powers and followed blindly in whatever direction the new machines and factories and consolidations and expansions happened to lead.

This perverted attitude was caught up, systematized, and standardized by the contemporary leaders of social thought, so that the whole characteristic economic doctrine and teaching of the nineteenth century were completely dominated by the beneficence of productive devices and activities. This philosophy has been admirably and ironically summed up by James MacKaye in his little book, "The Happiness of Nations" (a title obviously chosen as an antithesis to Adam Smith's famous work): "Wealth is a means to happiness. The more wealth there is, the greater will be the happiness. Consequently to be as happy as possible, spend as much time as possible producing wealth."

So, by the beginning of the twentieth century, the people of the Western world were thoroughly trained to think of themselves as producers, but were completely untutored with respect to their capacities as consumers—in fact, almost never received the slightest encouragement to think of themselves in that light. The whole philosophy of the contemporary Western world is a producers' philosophy.

Expressions and applications of this outlook abound on every hand. On almost every important economic question practically all the arguments, on both sides, are based upon the importance of production and consideration of the producer, and either completely ignore, or at best simply take for granted, consumption and consumer. The most conspicuous example of this generalization is, of course, the tariff. The whole defense of this incredible monstrosity is built upon the necessity of cherishing and fostering the productive interests of the country—individual producers, producing classes, the nation as a producer. But every single argument in favor of protection has an equally weighty, and much more logical, rebuttal when viewed from the standpoint of the consumer—but we seldom hear the latter. One of the redeeming features of conventional economics is that, for the most part, it does teach free trade; but the prevailing business dogmas are too strong for the academic economists.

Another vastly significant case in point is the typical business man's attitude toward wages. Wages appear to him as an important item in the cost of production. Only recently has he begun to glimpse the fact that wages are an identically important factor in the consuming power of the market. The first thing the average employer does in a period of over-production like the present is to pare down the pay-roll as near to the core as possible, forgetting that in so doing he is intensifying the evils of under-consumption, which are the real root of the trouble. All practices aiming at the limitation

of output, whether engaged in by employers or laborers, are based on the same conception. The great question is, "How can I promote my interests as a producer?" not "How can I best serve myself and other consumers?"

This attitude was variously and vigorously expounded during the years of the great fight for the restriction of immigration. All the economic arguments of the "liberal" camp were based on recognition of the immigrant as a producer—it occurred to none of them to remember that he was exactly as much a consumer.

Recent striking examples of the situation have been furnished by the alleged "dumping" of wheat in America, and cheap electric-light bulbs in England, by the Soviet Republic. This has been axiomatically regarded as a dastardly deed. The Bolsheviks have been held up to withering scorn and contumely for making it possible for American consumers to buy wheat and Englishmen to buy lamps cheaper than would otherwise have been the case.

To be sure, within the last few years there have been a few gleams of light on the horizon. A number of books have been written that recognize consumption as an important social phenomenon, and particularly the work of Stuart Chase is doing much to educate the public to think of themselves as consumers. We not infrequently hear the present economic situation referred to as a period of "under-consumption" rather than "overproduction." Manufacturers and advertising men have begun to recognize that the consumer exists, and must be taken into consideration. The doctrine that prosperity depends upon increased consumption of goods has been diligently preached by Foster and Catchings and others, and has enjoyed a good deal of popularity. But even so, the consumer has been almost invariably brought into the picture as a stimulus, a prerequisite, a *sine qua non*, to production. Thus Garett Garrett: "To be able to say in the evening, 'I have consumed more to-day than I consumed yesterday'—this now is a duty the individual owes to industrial society." Fancy the *duty* of consumption!

All our high-pressure salesmanship is devoted to stimulating consumption, not in the least in order that the consumer may be happier, or healthier, or more contented, but that he may multiply the possibilities of production. Says Ralph Borsodi, "No matter how much the consumer who can afford to pay may resist, he must be made to eat more, to wear out more clothes, to take more drugs, to blow out more tires. He must consume, consume, consume, so that our industries may produce, produce, produce."

It will take Herculean efforts to reverse this attitude, and accustom ourselves to thinking of ourselves as consumers, and of production as the humble handmaiden of consumption, justified and tolerable only to the extent that it genuinely subserves the consumption requirements of the human personality. But this must be done before we can even begin to reap the full advantage of our New Freedom.

Hand in hand with admiration for work, naturally, has gone condemnation of idleness. In Western countries idleness has been habitually regarded

as a vice, just like drunkenness or gambling. Numerous laws have penalized the idle on the same terms as serious criminals. Every proposal for the shortening of the working day of the common laborer has always been vigorously opposed as yielding too much leisure, to be expended in the demoralizing and depraving pursuits of idleness. "Spare time" has been considered as something dangerous, or at best irksome. It has been something to be disposed of, to be got rid of with the least possible effort and disturbance.

Among the staunchest devotees of the god of work has been the Christian religion. As so frequently happens, religion has espoused a doctrine that already enjoyed full social sanction, and has given it back to the community with the added weight of divine support and approval. Work has been presented as a pious duty. This was conspicuously illustrated in the case of the Protestant founders of this country. Starting with the assumption that the Lord would provide for his own in material ways as well as spiritual ("Yet, have I not seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging bread," "The righteous shall inherit the earth"), it was an easy step to the conclusion that the degree of worldly prosperity enjoyed by an individual was a measure of his favor with the Lord. And from this it was a simple deduction that the pursuit of wealth was one form of service to God. And this meant work.

We all remember with what gusto we used to sing the good old Gospel Hymn that adjured us to "Work, for the night is coming, Work mid springing flowers . . . Work through the sunny noon" (no time off for lunch), and so on till we finished "under the sunset skies," having fulfilled perfectly the injunction to "fill the brightest hours with labor." And all for what? What was the reward? "Rest comes sure and soon." Work in order that you may rest, rest in order that you may work! What are sparkling dew, springing flowers, radiant sunsets, all the splendors of glorious Nature for but to work in?

And so illustrations might be multiplied indefinitely—the *New York Times* editorially heralding the discovery that work is no longer a curse but a blessing—just because, forsooth, without work many persons cannot fill their stomachs; a popular magazine paying money to advertise the doctrine that "Economic America has no other problem than that of getting enough of its commodities into the hands of the masses of wage-earning America in order to keep the wheels of its mass production turning at the other end." But enough! The existing situation should be sufficiently clear. The great question is, what are we going to do about it?

What is needed is obviously a revolution in some of our basic philosophies of life. First of all, as already intimated, we must have a complete reversal of our characteristic attitude toward economic activities. The god of work must be cast down from his ancient throne, and the divinity of enjoyment put in his place. We must learn that consumption is the only justification and guide of production. We must learn that consumption requires the same scientific study and research that we have so generously lavished on pro-

duction. We must develop a technic of consumption. Hitherto we have relied upon the assumption that human beings know by intuition or instinct how to utilize the products of their own inventive achievements. This is utterly false. Our instincts trace back to our cave ancestors or their simian forbears. It is just as absurd to suppose that a man knows intuitively how most efficiently to enjoy a radio or an automobile as that he knows instinctively how to operate a steam shovel or a linotype. We must develop first a sound theory of consumption, and then a system of education and training for consumption.

Along with this, we must have a new philosophy of work. Work must be recognized not as a virtue or a blessing, but as an intrinsic evil. The only justification for work is its product. Work is a means to an end, and the end should govern the means. To be sure, it should be remembered that there may be, and often are, useful products of work aside from the ostensible and direct object of the work—by-products, as it were. There is doubtless a high disciplinary value, and often an intense personal satisfaction, in tackling a hard job, throwing all one's energies and capacities into it, and seeing it through to a successful conclusion, or even, in case of failure, realizing that one has done the best he could. But to secure these benefits, work must be voluntary, intelligent, purposeful, and essentially self-directed. These characteristics are conspicuously absent from a large portion of modern industrial work. Very frequently the machine worker of to-day does not even know what he is making or what its relation is to any general scheme of things.

Sometimes, too, there is pleasure in the very work itself. To the extent that this is true, the activity ceases to be work in the strict sense of the word. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the satisfaction which justifies the work comes directly, without the mediation of any concrete product of work. One man works hard in an office all the week so that he may play golf on Saturday afternoons and Sundays; another man becomes a golf professional from sheer love of the game. These are simply two different ways of getting satisfaction from work.

In the new day work must not only not be encouraged but not permitted unless there is some positive and demonstrable social good to be derived from it. Work is too potent a thing to be indulged in irresponsibly. We can't allow people to go about working at their own sweet will.

We must have a new philosophy of thrift. In the old days saving was practiced to provide against want or dependency in old age or to substitute future enjoyment for present. A small part of saving is still for these purposes, and that part is fully justified. But most modern saving is for investment, and investment means more machines and more productive plant, and so more potentialities of work. People in the future will not be allowed to save and invest recklessly.

We must have a new philosophy of waste. In the past waste has been considered as almost a mortal sin, virtually equivalent to a form of robbery. The assumption has been that the waster keeps somebody else from getting

goods that he otherwise would have enjoyed, or possibly that waste makes somebody work harder than he otherwise would need to. But under modern conditions waste is not necessarily an evil; it may be a distinct benefit. There are two types of waste which should be clearly distinguished. The first is waste which tends to deplete the natural resources of the land more rapidly than necessary. This is emphatically an evil—if anything, a more flagrant evil to-day than ever before. It is a form of robbery—the robbery of unborn generations. The other form of waste is simply the consumption of a certain commodity with less ultimate satisfaction than it is capable of yielding. If this means merely the arbitrary destruction of a part of the surplus product of past work it may be positively beneficial, by making a larger place for the product of the work that is now going on.

We must, most emphatically of all, have a new philosophy of idleness—or rather, we must substitute for the present philosophy of idleness a sound and comprehensive philosophy of leisure time. We must come to realize that leisure time, that is, time spent in pleasurable employment, is the only kind of time that makes life worth living. All other time is tolerable only as it contributes to the richness and developmental content of our leisure. But, of course, leisure, to be itself tolerable, must be immeasurably more than mere idleness. Leisure time should mean the opportunity for all those pursuits that really contribute to the realization and enlargement of personality. Many of these activities, in the case of certain individuals, may, as has already been intimated, bear the outward semblance of work. Every amateur photographer, cabinet maker, or gardener knows this. The distinction between work time and leisure time depends not on what is done but why it is done.

In this connection, the phrase "idle rich" must lose its current uncomplimentary significance. Idle is exactly what the rich ought to be. Idle, of course, in the sense that they are not doing remunerative work of a kind that keeps somebody else from getting the income that he can get only from work. Let us desist from lauding the scion of a wealthy family who puts on overalls and goes out to take his part in "the work of the world." There is not work enough to go around, and he already has his share of the good things of life. Let him devote his time to some noncompetitive pursuit—art, or philosophy, or research, or the breeding of Chow dogs or dahlias, or what you will—and leave work to those who have to have it.

One final requirement—we must have a new philosophy of education. There has been endless argumentation about the purpose and end of education. One of the most modern and popular theories is that education is to teach us to think. To-day this doctrine is wholly inadequate. The purpose of education should be to train us to *live*. Thinking is a part of the art of living, but it is by no means all of it. We already have machines to do a great deal of our thinking for us. What we need to learn is what life is really for, what it has potentially to offer, what is its relative scale of values, and how each of us, as a person, may best attain these values. What changes this new concept may induce in the average curriculum time alone can tell.

But the change in basis for evaluating courses is revolutionary. Education in the past has been almost exclusively focussed on work time, the education of the future must be centered on leisure time. As already intimated, a part of this new system of education must be the development of an inclusive theoretical science and practical art of consumption. This will involve the working out of formulas to enable us to establish the correct ratios between productive time and consumptive time. We must learn to recognize that consumption takes time just as truly as production, and we must discover precisely the amount of productive time which is required, under varying social and economic conditions, to provide just that combination of material goods and leisure time that will yield the maximum degree of satisfaction in consumption.

And when this is all done, when all these philosophical revolutions have been accomplished, and their teachings put into effect, we shall probably discover that work, in the ancient sense of the word, has almost disappeared, vanished into thin air. All the drudgery, all the dirty and disagreeable tasks, will be done by machinery, and the others will have lost the characteristic features of work. The machines will be so intelligently administered that they will operate only in such ways and for such periods of time as are necessary to turn out the goods required for the most efficient consumption of the community. The residuum of activity still necessary to be done by human agencies will be so limited in quantity, and so evenly distributed among all the individuals in the community, that it will be at worst neutral, and for the most part positively pleasurable. For, as already observed, the distinction between work and play is not what is done but how, to what extent, and for what purpose it is done. There is practically nothing which is done by masses of people as work that is not also done by individuals for pleasure and recreation. When mechanization has been carried to its ultimate perfection there will be so little of routine production left for human hands and minds to do that in all probability there will be actual competition for the doing of it for its own sake, for the interest, variety, and stimulation that it has to offer.

Thus the distinction between work and recreation will at last be wiped out altogether. Everyone will be left free for genuinely creative activities. Type will still be set, clothes made, furniture built, gardens planted, and ditches dug by hand. But these things will be done in just the same spirit as now pictures are painted, songs sung, and doilies embroidered—for the delight and pleasure in doing them, for the expression and development of personality. Few enjoyments are higher than those which come from impressing one's own individuality upon a material medium, especially if it be in measurably permanent form. Mankind is endowed with limitless capacities for creating beautiful and useful things in varied and individual forms. The men of the future—and not such a distant future, either—will devote themselves to these and kindred pursuits, and will look back upon their ancestors who spent their time and energy in the routine production of standardized, conventional, and largely superfluous material objects in much the

same attitude with which we regard the savages who knock out their teeth, brand their skin, or cut off the joints of their fingers for some traditional reason that they do not even think of trying to understand, but just blindly obey.

THE SLUMP IN FOOTBALL COMMON¹

by John R. Tunis

THE chart of Football Common, which took such a marked upswing after the war, and particularly during the big bull market, has been going steadily downhill in company with even sounder values since 1929. That year the stock reached its peak when Notre Dame traveled 8300 miles and played before 600,000 spectators, taking in the tidy sum of over \$2,000,000. That was an all-time high which has never been reached since, nor is it ever likely to be attained again.

First effects of the current slump were noticed during the season of 1930. Harvard, which played to over 400,000 in 1929, drew but 350,000 in 1930. In its Bulletin No. 26 the Carnegie Foundation reported that football attendance and receipts fell off at practically every leading university in the United States that year, including California, Chicago, Harvard, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio State, Pennsylvania, Princeton, Purdue, Stanford, and Wisconsin. The Army-Navy football game played for charity to obtain the sum of \$1,250,000 for the Salvation Army, actually brought in \$600,000, or half the amount expected. As early as December 1930, one or two universities had the good sense to perceive the way the wind was blowing. Already Nebraska and Iowa were beginning to cut down their athletic expenditures in various ways. The deflation in Football Common had commenced.

Last season it was far more noticeable. In the South, football receipts fell away from 3 to 40 per cent, according to the college. Ohio State's takings went off by a fifth from the previous season. One large institution in the Middle West had but 17,000 persons at its three big home games. Iowa drew 60,000 spectators instead of 80,000 for the year before. Wisconsin cut its schedule from seven to six games. John L. Griffith, high priest of football for the Western Conference, declared that in the Middle West receipts fell off from 30 to 40 per cent at every college. "Ticket purchasers showed more discrimination in the question of selecting games they wished to see than a year ago," he explained tactfully.

Nearly every prominent college eleven earned less money in 1930 than in 1929, and still less in 1931. The surprising thing is that these figures cover a period during which interest in athletics generally was greater than at any other period in our history, a time when professional sports had banner seasons.

¹ Condensed from *The Atlantic Monthly*. By permission of the Editor and the author.

Professional hockey in 1930 and 1931 prospered, professional football in 1931 had its best year in both attendance and receipts, while the million-dollar gate for the World's Series in October 1931 was the largest since 1926.

What is the reason for this slump in Football Common? The reason is the waning interest in the game, despite the assertions of its paid publicists, on the part of the classes whence its customers come—graduates, undergraduates, and the general public. With less money to spend, the public stays at home and listens over the radio. Also with less money, and with steadily decreasing interest in the outcome of big games, the undergraduate is tempted to play golf on sunny November afternoons. The alumni, for whom a trip from New York to New Haven will break up a twenty-dollar bill, can no longer afford many such trips. Protests of graduates echo on every side. Mr. Lamont Dominick, Yale '95, a prominent alumnus of New York, wrote to the *Yale Daily News* to demand the ending of the "exploiting of the students for large gate receipts." I remember several years ago talking to Director William J. Bingham, Director of Athletics at Harvard, about the price of seats at games. "But you would pay \$5.00 for a show and think nothing of it," he said. Nor did he appear to understand why I laughed at this excellent though unintentional analogy.

It is also my conviction, though I shall doubtless be chivied for saying so, that there is a large and fast-growing number of graduates who are eternally sick of the football madness, who are weary of the stress upon the financial side of what is presumed to be a sport, who become tired of the noise and uproar about what is supposed to be a game, who read this sort of thing, a gem which actually appeared in a New York newspaper, with something akin to disgust: "As Booth halted in the striped end zone, his old schoolmate at New Haven High, Freddy Loeser, rushed up, threw gorilla-like arms about the midget's shoulders, and, believe it or not, kissed him upon the cheek. It was the French Army accolade delivered for the first time upon an American gridiron, the spontaneous tribute of a hard-boiled fighter to a football genius." The first time, and let us hope the last time, too.

Such mawkishness is causing many followers of football to desert it. The maudlinism over the death of Cadet Sheridan in the Yale-Army game last fall is another instance to the point. Instead of showing the tragic waste of a fine young life, the press in general devoted columns to comparing him with every great American soldier from Washington to Pershing, explaining that his life was sacrificed for his country and wallowing in the crassest kind of cheap sentimentality. Only one newspaper pointed out the difference in the times as evidenced by his death and that of Cadet Byrne in the Harvard game some twenty years earlier. Then the remainder of the West Point schedule was instantly abandoned. Last year it was carried out in full, every game was played. Yes, Cadet Sheridan would have wished it so. Doubtless. Besides, the Notre Dame, Pittsburgh, and Navy games were yet to come. Half a million dollars at the box office was involved. "Sport" has become too complicated to be given up just for a mere gesture.

Does one wonder that there has been heavy short selling in Football Common of late years?

The chief reason, as of course everyone is well aware, comes from within the colleges themselves—not, as it should, from authority, but usually from those without authority, the articulate minority of the undergraduate body. They were the first to realize the absurdity of the football situation. Just when the earliest outbreak within the colleges began is rather hard to determine, but one of the first and one of the most important appeared in the *Harvard Crimson* in December of 1925, when that newspaper made definite suggestions for changes in the game. These suggestions, which appeared radical and visionary at the time, seem less so now. Some, such as the abolition of spring practice, the institution of House teams, a final House game with Yale have been adopted. Others, such as the reduction of the schedule to a few games in mid-November, seem to be on the way.

What was an isolated instance of revolt in 1925 is to-day common everywhere—east and west, north and south. Curious, is it not, that the undergraduate has forced the hand of authority? Even the conservative régime which dominates the American university has been obliged to bestir itself under the urgings and proddings of the undergraduate press and the pressure of a small section of the undergraduate body. Rarely, all too rarely for American intellectual integrity, have those in charge been trail blazers.

Recent years have witnessed a whole series of attacks upon football by undergraduates, ranging from demands for the abolition of gate receipts as “not in accord with the spirit of amateur sport” at Haverford, to the more sensational outbursts at Northwestern, where the student newspaper declared openly that despite the creditable season the majority of the undergraduates were tired of football, and to the vote at Johns Hopkins, where 320 students out of 850 actually voted to abandon the game. It was largely undergraduate sentiment which forced the resignation of the head coach at New York University, John H. (Chick) Meehan, who symbolized big-time football with all its trappings, and the appointment of a graduate of the college in his place. This, too, at a time when Meehan was producing first-class teams.

Exactly how much do these college newspapers reflect undergraduate opinion? Sometimes not at all. Often only to a small degree. Frequently they represent the opinion of a tiny but articulate minority and nothing more. The point is, however, that these views, so often considered advanced and radical, have a tremendous importance and influence on the thinking of those who follow. If Manchester thinks to-day what Paris will think to-morrow and what London will think next year, the *Harvard Crimson* of 1925 held views which the average undergraduate holds to-day and which the college authorities will accept in a few years more as their own.

Several seasons ago Head Coach Fletcher of Case had the everlasting temerity to declare that “intercollegiate football is dying.” He was merely laughed at for his statement; to-day it seems less amusing. Since then three colleges—Loyola with 5000 undergraduates, Regis, another Jesuit institution,

and Kentucky Wesleyan—have definitely abandoned the game. It may be news to some readers to learn that there are actually colleges in this country without a football team. Besides the three already mentioned, there are Emory University at Atlanta, Georgia; Massachusetts Institute of Technology at Cambridge; Reed College in Portland, Oregon; Antioch in Yellow Springs, Ohio, and doubtless many others. Certainly the number seems destined to increase. When the game was abolished at Loyola, the Reverend R. M. Kelley, S.J., the president, remarked, "It has been a matter of agreeable surprise to me to find out how many thoughtful people are in complete agreement with me on this important subject." He was further surprised, after a year without football, to discover that the athletic finances of the university were actually in a better state than before. "With the discontinuance of football," he is quoted as saying, "we expected that a substantial saving could be effected. The athletic statement at the close of the year surpassed our fondest expectations, for it shows that Loyola has been able to operate its new athletic program without a loss. It is significant that this has been accomplished without curtailing the basketball, track, or minor sport programs." What a blow to those apologists for the game who have long argued that football gate receipts were essential for the support of other sports, as if, indeed, this was reason enough for all the ballyhoo!

These brief indications simply show what is taking place the country over. Terrible though it is that a stock as fundamentally sound as Football Common should have to suffer such a drop in value, there is one bright spot upon the horizon. Periods of depression always stimulate efficiency: high salaries are cut, useless retainers are discharged, extravagant practices are eliminated, costs are pared to rock bottom. What has taken place in American business is also taking place in America's greatest sport—which, after all, is only sublimated business.

One reason why Football Common has taken a slump is that the leaders of the game have not been leaders. The men in charge of football, the head coaches, have almost without exception preferred to follow the trend rather than lead. Since 1907, when the forward pass was introduced into football, the coaches have invariably been found on the timid, conservative side. If football is the game of blood and iron that it is supposed to be, one would expect to have discovered its leading exponents in the van of any progressive movement for the betterment of the sport. On the contrary, they appear to have done their best to keep football in a condition from which, first of all, they could benefit personally. Some coaches have had an unfortunate influence on the game. Some have had a tremendously beneficent influence. Some men are bad coaches. Some are good coaches. But all are human.

The morning newspaper before me carries the following headlines on its sport pages: "Montgomery's Injured Knee Keeps Him Out"; "Mendelsohn's Collar Bone Broken in Navy Practice"; "Lyons Suffers Broken Nose"; "Morton Watches Practice with Bruised Leg"; "McCarthy Gaining after Concussion." Headlines such as these, picked at random, can be duplicated almost

any day during the football season. Whether or not football is the most dangerous of sports is open to question. Certainly it is dangerous enough. What steps have been taken by the coaches to obviate these dangers?

Painfully few. That some coaches permit, even if they do not actually teach, the famous rabbit punch—the blow delivered on the back of the neck to lay a man low with ease—is pretty well established. Many good folk were shocked a few years ago when it was discovered that linesmen went into battle with hands taped like prize fighters, in order to deliver this rabbit punch, which, incidentally, is a form of punishment not permitted in the prize ring. In an open letter to the press, Mr. W. S. Langford, Secretary of the Rules Committee and himself a former coach, denied that such a practice existed. Shortly afterward Mr. Langford's own committee, composed largely of former coaches and assisted by an advisory board of coaches including Mr. R. C. Zuppke, Mr. J. F. Meehan, and Mr. J. B. Sutherland, adopted a rule barring the punch. This was an illustration of intellectual dishonesty which it would be difficult to equal in the history of American universities.

Have any of the coaches been in the forefront of the various changes that have been made recently in what was once a game? Not visibly. "Football reform is the bunk," said Mr. Zuppke, and doubtless the other members of the hierarchy would cordially agree with these sentiments. Along with Mr. McGugin and Mr. Dobie of Cornell he sees nothing in giving football back to the boys. Why not, retort the coaches, give racing back to the horses? The analogy is indicative of the mentality of the average ruler of the game. Have any coaches protested against spring practice? Against night football? Painfully few. There are to-day five pages of rules in the Rule Book describing the improper use of hands, but rules are superfluous in a thing of this sort. If the head coach merely says a sentence or two condemning roughness before the first practice, there will be no slugging on his team.

Of course there are many fine and honorable men in the coaching profession. So, too, there are in politics. But in politics, as in football, these men do not lead. "The game may be stopped from the inside instead of from the outside if conditions remain as they are," said Mr. W. W. Roper of Princeton several years ago. He was right. Mr. Roper was a leader. Among the school ranks Mr. Edward F. Storey of Mamaroneck, New York, also stands out; he has worked to eliminate injuries and simplify the rules. These men are the exception. To-day the leading coaches show a painful lack of intellectual leadership. Their mentality can best be described by two examples, one from the pen of Walter Trumbull, a leading sports writer who tells a story on Head Coach Lou Little, Columbia's \$18,500 magician. While the good Dr. Little was playing a game at Georgetown, his team was backed up to its own goal—opponent's ball on the one-yard line, fourth down. Suddenly the coach observed that the substitute next to him had slipped off the bench and was kneeling with his head in his hands. Wondering what was the matter, he asked the lad whether he was sick.

"Sick, hell! I'm praying," came the answer.

"And I guess the boy's call for help must have been heard somewhere," said Mr. Little, "because they didn't cross our goal line."

Last winter a reporter from the *New Yorker* went to a movie theatre and there took down an actual transcription of the remarks of Mr. Heartly (Hunk) Anderson, who was describing the equipment of a football man in a news reel. Mr. Anderson joined the fellowship of educated men at Notre Dame in 1922, and is now head coach at that institution.

"The fellow on the left," said Mr. Anderson, "couldn't run a hundred yards in fifteen seconds with all them pads and contraptions, and as a matter of fact he is not as well protected from injury as the one dressed in silk pants. That roll-neck collar there affords a lot of protection with them funny-looking shoulder pads, and all they did was look tough and not protect; and the pants with the funny old pads; then you go down to them shin guards with the big knee pads to protect the legs and the heavy shoes. No wonder they couldn't run in them days."

Mr. Little and Mr. Anderson are leaders in their profession.

Football Common selling off? Naturally. For the coaches have spent their time doing about everything but coaching. From Cambridge to California the head coach writes for the newspapers; very often he acts in a news reel, talks over the radio, draws comic strips, conducts summer schools for fellow coaches, acts as sales manager for a brokerage house, sells his name and endorses any product that comes along, and in general does whatever he can to feather his own nest to the detriment of the game itself.

"If undergraduate interest continues to shift from the conventional type of intercollegiate contest to intramural sport, new and serious problems are certain to rise. There may easily result a new phase of inter-college competition, important chiefly for its spontaneous support by undergraduate players with much less of panoply than now surrounds our conventional intercollegiate athletics, but with far more genuine enjoyment among the undergraduates participating. Incidentally, inter-college matches of this type fortunately have, and probably will continue to have, little news value. It remains to be seen whether the colleges will encourage or discourage this development."

So says the Carnegie Bulletin No. 26 published in April 1931.

To-day practically every college in the country has an intramural athletic program more or less extensively developed. This may lead, as at Notre Dame, to a compact and flourishing system of feeding athletes to varsity teams, and a consequently successful record in most intercollegiate competition. Or it may tend to bring out many men who would otherwise neglect athletics, at the same time decreasing the interest in and importance of extramural contests. At Yale and Harvard each winter almost a hundred teams compete in various sports, and despite opposition from deploring old grads, intramural athletics are growing under the House Plans, and tending eventually toward fewer inter-collegiate games. The *Yale Record* over a year ago said editorially: "We predict, with no great astuteness, that the time is not far distant when Yale and

Harvard will abandon varsity teams, restricting their extramural activities to a single game between the all-House teams."

The old grads may growl and groan, but this is coming, whether they like the idea or not. When it does come, what will these colleges do without the money from football gate receipts to support their athletic programs? One of the so-called justifications for football has been the fact that it financed all other sport within the university, and when gate receipts were running over a million a year all was well. As long as the bull market held, things were likely to remain in *status quo*. But now the gate receipts are falling off, and are likely to fall off still more.

Many observers believe the answer lies in athletic endowment. Some years ago it was prematurely announced in the press that Harvard had actually undertaken a campaign to endow sport under the House Plan, with only a single football game against Yale, with undergraduates engaging chiefly in friendly sport against each other, with little publicity and no lengthy write-ups in the daily press. The report was untrue. A pity.

How interesting it would have been had it been true: the gate eliminated, the head coach a teacher and not a money grabber, the star athlete obscured, the publicity man, the chief scout, the various supernumeraries gone from the picture—everything, in short, reduced to its simplest common denominator. Impossible, say those wise in athletic lore. Yet one wonders?

Before me is a Remington Rand Business Service Card on which is printed the list of articles necessary for Harvard football players, including the following: undershirt, under-drawers, cotton socks, wool socks, stockings, garters, belts, inner soles, jerseys, pants, shoes, sweat shirts, Glastonburys, hoods, head-gears, shoulder pads, knee pads, kidney pads, gloves, sweaters, and so forth and so on.

If the colleges can be persuaded to abandon the race to keep up with Athletic Director Jones, to curtail the building of ultra-luxurious marble shower baths, blue-tiled swimming pools, hospitals with radiotherapy apparatus to bake out the aches and pains of the football heroes; if they can be persuaded to hand out \$500 shells to the varsity crew, cut down the scouts and curtail the number of camp followers who trail along for the Big Game, abolish Pullman-car football, give up the athletic scholarships (Professor Maurice A. Blake, Chairman of the Council on Athletics at Rutgers, says, "A scholarship of \$200-\$300 is now regarded as mere pin money by an athlete of recognized football ability"), endowment funds may be sufficient for intramural sport programs without considering gate receipts from the overdeveloped business of football.

Possibly the colleges of the country will have to adopt some such idea whether they like it or not, because football, in its present complex and unhealthy condition, is dying from the inside. Every evidence shows that the game is being killed by its own excesses. To argue that this is a good thing or a bad thing is useless. Football's day is done.

"Only the financial factor," said the *Princeton Tiger* last year, "has kept

football where it is to-day. When this disappears, or the loss becomes greater than the gain, football will go. We give it ten years."

Ten years! Well, ten years is indeed a short time. But what do you suppose they will be using the stadiums for in the year 1957? Football Common has an enormous funded debt and no big surplus tucked away for such an emergency as confronts it at present. If, therefore, you are heavily interested in the stock, there is only one thing to do: take your losses and get out—before it is too late.

EVOLUTION AND ETHICS¹

by Thomas Henry Huxley

THERE is a delightful child's story, known by the title of "Jack and the Bean-stalk," with which my contemporaries who are present will be familiar. But so many of our grave and reverend juniors have been brought up on severer intellectual diet, and, perhaps, have become acquainted with fairyland only through primers of comparative mythology, that it may be needful to give an outline of the tale. It is a legend of a bean-plant, which grows and grows until it reaches the high heavens and there spreads out into a vast canopy of foliage. The hero, being moved to climb the stalk, discovers that the leafy expanse supports a world composed of the same elements as that below, but yet strangely new; and his adventures there, on which I may not dwell, must have completely changed his views of the nature of things; though the story, not having been composed by, or for, philosophers, has nothing to say about views.

My present enterprise has a certain analogy to that of the daring adventurer. I beg you to accompany me in an attempt to reach a world which, to many, is probably strange, by the help of a bean. It is, as you know, a simple, inert-looking thing. Yet, if planted under proper conditions, of which sufficient warmth is one of the most important, it manifests active powers of a very remarkable kind. A small green seedling emerges, rises to the surface of the soil, rapidly increases in size and, at the same time, undergoes a series of metamorphoses which do not excite our wonder as much as those which meet us in legendary history, merely because they are to be seen every day and all day long.

By insensible steps, the plant builds itself up into a large and various fabric of root, stem, leaves, flowers, and fruit, every one moulded within and without in accordance with an extremely complex but, at the same time, minutely defined pattern. In each of these complicated structures, as in their smallest constituents, there is an immanent energy which, in harmony with that resident in all the others, incessantly works towards the maintenance of the

¹ From T. H. Huxley, *Evolution and Ethics* By permission of D. Appleton-Century Co.

whole and the efficient performance of the part which it has to play in the economy of nature. But no sooner has the edifice, reared with such exact elaboration, attained completeness, than it begins to crumble. By degrees, the plant withers and disappears from view, leaving behind more or fewer apparently inert and simple bodies, just like the bean from which it sprang; and, like it, endowed with the potentiality of giving rise to a similar cycle of manifestations.

Neither the poetic nor the scientific imagination is put to much strain in the search after analogies with this process of going forth and, as it were, returning to the starting-point. It may be likened to the ascent and descent of a slung stone, or the course of an arrow along its trajectory. Or we may say that the living energy takes first an upward and then a downward road. Or it may seem preferable to compare the expansion of the germ into the full-grown plant, to the unfolding of a fan, or to the rolling forth and widening of a stream; and thus to arrive at the conception of "development," or "evolution." Here, as elsewhere, names are "noise and smoke"; the important point is to have a clear and adequate conception of the fact signified by a name. And, in this case, the fact is the Sisyphæan process, in the course of which, the living and growing plant passes from the relative simplicity and latent potentiality of the seed to the full epiphany of a highly differentiated type, thence to fall back to simplicity and potentiality.

The value of a strong intellectual grasp of the nature of this process lies in the circumstance that what is true of the bean is true of living things in general. From very low forms up to the highest—in the animal no less than in the vegetable kingdom—the process of life presents the same appearance of cyclical evolution. Nay, we have but to cast our eyes over the rest of the world and cyclical change presents itself on all sides. It meets us in the water that flows to the sea and returns to the springs; in the heavenly bodies that wax and wane, go and return to their places; in the inexorable sequence of the ages of man's life; in that successive rise, apogee, and fall of dynasties and of states which is the most prominent topic of civil history.

As no man fording a swift stream can dip his foot twice into the same water, so no man can, with exactness, affirm of anything in the sensible world that it is. As he utters the words, nay, as he thinks them, the predicate ceases to be applicable; the present has become the past; the "is" should be "was." And the more we learn of the nature of things, the more evident is it that what we call rest is only unperceived activity; that seeming peace is silent but strenuous battle. In every part, at every moment, the state of the cosmos is the expression of a transitory adjustment of contending forces; a scene of strife, in which all the combatants fall in turn. What is true of each part, is true of the whole. Natural knowledge tends more and more to the conclusion that "all the choir of heaven and furniture of the earth" are the transitory forms of parcels of cosmic substance wending along the road of evolution, from nebulous potentiality, through endless growths of sun and planet and satellite; through all varieties of matter; through infinite diversities of life and thought;

possibly, through modes of being of which we neither have a conception, nor are competent to form any, back to the indefinable latency from which they arose. Thus the most obvious attribute of the cosmos is its impermanence. It assumes the aspect not so much of a permanent entity as of a changeful process in which naught endures save the flow of energy and the rational order which pervades it.

We have climbed our bean-stalk and have reached a wonderland in which the common and the familiar become things new and strange. In the exploration of the cosmic process thus typified, the highest intelligence of man finds inexhaustible employment; giants are subdued to our service; and the spiritual affections of the contemplative philosopher are engaged by beauties worthy of eternal constancy.

But there is another aspect of the cosmic process, so perfect as a mechanism, so beautiful as a work of art. Where the cosmopoietic energy works through sentient beings, there arises, among its other manifestations, that which we call pain or suffering. This baleful product of evolution increases in quantity and in intensity, with advancing grades of animal organization, until it attains its highest level in man. Further, the consummation is not reached in man, the mere animal; nor in man, the whole or half savage; but only in man, the member of an organized polity. And it is a necessary consequence of his attempt to live in this way; that is, under those conditions which are essential to the full development of his noblest powers.

Man, the animal, in fact, has worked his way to the headship of the sentient world, and has become the superb animal which he is, in virtue of his success in the struggle for existence. The conditions having been of a certain order, man's organization has adjusted itself to them better than that of his competitors in the cosmic strife. In the case of mankind, the self-assertion, the unscrupulous seizing upon all that can be grasped, the tenacious holding of all that can be kept, which constitute the essence of the struggle for existence, have answered. For his successful progress, throughout the savage state, man has been largely indebted to those qualities which he shares with the ape and the tiger; his exceptional physical organization; his cunning, his sociability, his curiosity, and his imitateness; his ruthless and ferocious destructiveness when his anger is roused by opposition.

But, in proportion as men have passed from anarchy to social organization, and in proportion as civilization has grown in worth, these deeply ingrained serviceable qualities have become defects. After the manner of successful persons, civilized man would gladly kick down the ladder by which he has climbed. He would be only too pleased to see "the ape and tiger die." But they decline to suit his convenience; and the unwelcome intrusion of these boon companions of his hot youth into the ranged existence of civil life adds pains and griefs, innumerable and immeasurably great, to those which the cosmic process necessarily brings on the mere animal. In fact, civilized man brands all these ape and tiger promptings with the name of sins; he punishes

many of the acts which flow from them as crimes; and, in extreme cases, he does his best to put an end to the survival of the fittest of former days by axe and rope.

I have said that civilized man has reached this point; the assertion is perhaps too broad and general; I had better put it that ethical man has attained thereto. The science of ethics professes to furnish us with a reasoned rule of life; to tell us what is right action and why it is so. Whatever differences of opinion may exist among experts there is a general consensus that the ape and tiger methods of the struggle for existence are not reconcilable with sound ethical principles.

The hero of our story descended the bean-stalk, and came back to the common world, where fare and work were alike hard; where ugly competitors were much commoner than beautiful princesses; and where the everlasting battle with self was much less sure to be crowned with victory than a turn-to with a giant. We have done the like. Thousands upon thousands of our fellows, thousands of years ago, have preceded us in finding themselves face to face with the same dread problem of evil. They also have seen that the cosmic process is evolution; that it is full of wonder, full of beauty, and, at the same time, full of pain. They have sought to discover the bearing of these great facts on ethics; to find out whether there is, or is not, a sanction for morality in the ways of the cosmos.

Theories of the universe, in which the conception of evolution plays a leading part, were extant at least six centuries before our era. Certain knowledge of them, in the fifth century, reaches us from localities as distant as the valley of the Ganges and the Asiatic coasts of the Ægean. To the early philosophers of Hindostan, no less than to those of Ionia, the salient and characteristic feature of the phenomenal world was its changefulness; the unresting flow of all things, through birth to visible being and thence to not being, in which they could discern no sign of a beginning and for which they saw no prospect of an ending. It was no less plain to some of these antique forerunners of modern philosophy that suffering is the badge of all the tribe of sentient things; that it is no accidental accompaniment, but an essential constituent of the cosmic process. The energetic Greek might find fierce joys in a world in which "strife is father and king"; but the old Aryan spirit was subdued to quietism in the Indian sage; the mist of suffering which spread over humanity hid everything else from his view; to him life was one with suffering and suffering with life.

In Hindostan, as in Ionia, a period of relatively high and tolerably stable civilization had succeeded long ages of semi-barbarism and struggle. Out of wealth and security had come leisure and refinement, and, close at their heels, had followed the malady of thought. To the struggle for bare existence, which never ends, though it may be alleviated and partially disguised for a fortunate few, succeeded the struggle to make existence intelligible and to

bring the order of things into harmony with the moral sense of man, which also never ends, but, for the thinking few, becomes keener with every increase of knowledge and with every step towards the realization of a worthy ideal of life.

Two thousand five hundred years ago, the value of civilization was as apparent as it is now; then, as now, it was obvious that only in the garden of an orderly polity can the finest fruits humanity is capable of bearing be produced. But it had also become evident that the blessings of culture were not unmixed. The garden was apt to turn into a hothouse. The stimulation of the senses, the pampering of the emotions, endlessly multiplied the sources of pleasure. The constant widening of the intellectual field indefinitely extended the range of that especially human faculty of looking before and after, which adds to the fleeting present those old and new worlds of the past and the future, wherein men dwell the more the higher their culture. But that very sharpening of the sense and that subtle refinement of emotion, which brought such a wealth of pleasures, were fatally attended by a proportional enlargement of the capacity for suffering; and the divine faculty of imagination, while it created new heavens and new earths, provided them with the corresponding hells of futile regret for the past and morbid anxiety for the future. Finally, the inevitable penalty of over-stimulation, exhaustion, opened the gates of civilization to its great enemy, ennui; the stale and flat weariness when man delights not, nor woman neither; when all things are vanity and vexation; and life seems not worth living except to escape the bore of dying.

Even purely intellectual progress brings about its revenges. Problems settled in a rough and ready way by rude men, absorbed in action, demand renewed attention and show themselves to be still unread riddles when men have time to think. The beneficent demon, doubt, whose name is Legion, and who dwells amongst the tombs of old faiths, enters into mankind and thenceforth refuses to be cast out. Sacred customs, venerable dooms of ancestral wisdom, hallowed by tradition and professing to hold good for all time, are put to the question. Cultured reflection asks for their credentials; judges them by its own standards; finally, gathers those of which it approves into ethical systems, in which the reasoning is rarely much more than a decent pretext for the adoption of foregone conclusions.

One of the oldest and most important elements in such systems is the conception of justice. Society is impossible unless those who are associated agree to observe certain rules of conduct towards one another; its stability depends on the steadiness with which they abide by that agreement; and, so far as they waver, that mutual trust which is the bond of society is weakened or destroyed. Wolves could not hunt in packs except for the real, though unexpressed, understanding that they should not attack one another during the chase. The most rudimentary polity is a pack of men living under the like tacit, or expressed, understanding; and having made the very important advance upon wolf society, that they agree to use the force of the whole body against individuals who violate it and in favour of those who observe it.

This observance of a common understanding, with the consequent distribution of punishments and rewards according to accepted rules, received the name of justice, while the contrary was called injustice. Early ethics did not take much note of the animus of the violator of the rules. But civilization could not advance far, without the establishment of a capital distinction between the case of involuntary and that of wilful misdeed; between a merely wrong action and a guilty one. And, with increasing refinement of moral appreciation, the problem of desert, which arises out of this distinction, acquired more and more theoretical and practical importance. If life must be given for life, yet it was recognized that the unintentional slayer did not altogether deserve death; and, by a sort of compromise between the public and the private conception of justice, a sanctuary was provided in which he might take refuge from the avenger of blood.

The idea of justice thus underwent a gradual sublimation from punishment and reward according to acts, to punishment and reward according to desert; or, in other words, according to motive. Righteousness, that is, action from right motive, not only became synonymous with justice, but the positive constituent of innocence and the very heart of goodness.

Now when the ancient sage, whether Indian or Greek, who had attained to this conception of goodness, looked the world, and especially human life, in the face, he found it as hard as we do to bring the course of evolution into harmony with even the elementary requirements of the ethical ideal of the just and the good.

If there is one thing plainer than another, it is that neither the pleasures nor the pains of life, in the merely animal world, are distributed according to desert; for it is admittedly impossible for the lower orders of sentient beings to deserve either the one or the other. If there is a generalization from the facts of human life which has the assent of thoughtful men in every age and country, it is that the violator of ethical rules constantly escapes the punishment which he deserves; that the wicked flourishes like a green bay tree, while the righteous begs his bread; that the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children; that, in the realm of nature, ignorance is punished just as severely as wilful wrong; and that thousands upon thousands of innocent beings suffer for the crime, or the unintentional trespass of one.

Greek and Semite and Indian are agreed upon this subject. The book of Job is at one with the "Works and Days" and the Buddhist Sutras; the Psalmist and the Preacher of Israel, with the Tragic Poets of Greece. What is a more common motive of the ancient tragedy in fact, than the unfathomable injustice of the nature of things; what is more deeply felt to be true than its presentation of the destruction of the blameless by the work of his own hands, or by the fatal operation of the sins of others? Surely Œdipus was pure of heart; it was the natural sequence of events—the cosmic process—which drove him, in all innocence, to slay his father and become the husband of his mother, to the desolation of his people and his own headlong

ruin. Or to step, for a moment, beyond the chronological limits I have set myself, what constitutes the sempiternal attraction of Hamlet but the appeal to deepest experience of that history of a no less blameless dreamer, dragged, in spite of himself, into a world out of joint; involved in a tangle of crime and misery, created by one of the prime agents of the cosmic process as it works in and through man?

Thus, brought before the tribunal of ethics, the cosmos might well seem to stand condemned. The conscience of man revolted against the moral indifference of nature, and the microcosmic atom should have found the illimitable macrocosm guilty. But few, or none, ventured to record that verdict.

In the great Semitic trial of this issue, Job takes refuge in silence and submission; the Indian and the Greek, less wise perhaps, attempt to reconcile the irreconcilable and plead for the defendant. To this end, the Greeks invented Theodicies; while the Indians devised what, in its ultimate form, must rather be termed a Cosmodicy. For, although Buddhism recognizes gods many and lords many, they are products of the cosmic process; and transitory, however long enduring, manifestations of its eternal activity. In the doctrine of transmigration, whatever its origin, Brahminical and Buddhist speculation found, ready to hand, the means of constructing a plausible vindication of the ways of the cosmos to man. If this world is full of pain and sorrow; if grief and evil fall, like the rain, upon both the just and the unjust; it is because, like the rain, they are links in the endless chain of natural causation by which past, present, and future are indissolubly connected; and there is no more injustice in the one case than in the other. Every sentient being is reaping as it has sown; if not in this life, then in one or other of the infinite series of antecedent existences of which it is the latest term. The present distribution of good and evil is, therefore, the algebraical sum of accumulated positive and negative deserts; or, rather, it depends on the floating balance of the account. For it was not thought necessary that a complete settlement should ever take place. Arrears might stand over as a sort of "hanging gale"; a period of celestial happiness just earned might be succeeded by ages of torment in a hideous nether world, the balance still overdue for some remote ancestral error.

Whether the cosmic process looks any more moral than at first, after such a vindication, may perhaps be questioned. Yet this plea of justification is not less plausible than others; and none but very hasty thinkers will reject it on the ground of inherent absurdity. Like the doctrine of evolution itself, that of transmigration has its roots in the world of reality; and it may claim such support as the great argument from analogy is capable of supplying.

* * *

Let us now set our faces westwards, towards Asia Minor and Greece and Italy, to view the rise and progress of another philosophy, apparently independent, but no less pervaded by the conception of evolution.

The sages of Miletus were pronounced evolutionists; and, however dark

may be some of the sayings of Heraclitus of Ephesus, who was probably a contemporary of Gautama, no better expressions of the essence of the modern doctrine of evolution can be found than are presented by some of his pithy aphorisms and striking metaphors. Indeed, many of my present auditors must have observed that, more than once, I have borrowed from him in the brief exposition of the theory of evolution with which this discourse commenced.

But when the focus of Greek intellectual activity shifted to Athens, the leading minds concentrated their attention upon ethical problems. Forsaking the study of the macrocosm for that of the microcosm, they lost the key to the thought of the great Ephesian, which, I imagine, is more intelligible to us than it was to Socrates, or to Plato. Socrates, more especially, set the fashion of a kind of inverse agnosticism, by teaching that the problems of physics lie beyond the reach of the human intellect; that the attempt to solve them is essentially vain; that the one worthy object of investigation is the problem of ethical life; and his example was followed by the Cynics and the later Stoics. Even the comprehensive knowledge and the penetrating intellect of Aristotle failed to suggest to him that in holding the eternity of the world, within its present range of mutation, he was making a retrogressive step. The scientific heritage of Heraclitus passed into the hands neither of Plato nor of Aristotle, but into those of Democritus. But the world was not yet ready to receive the great conceptions of the philosopher of Abdera. It was reserved for the Stoics to return to the track marked out by the earlier philosophers; and, professing themselves disciples of Heraclitus, to develop the idea of evolution systematically. In doing this, they not only omitted some characteristic features of their master's teaching, but they made additions altogether foreign to it. One of the most influential of these importations was the transcendental theism which had come into vogue. The restless, fiery energy, operating according to law, out of which all things emerge and into which they return, in the endless successive cycles of the great year; which creates and destroys worlds as a wanton child builds up, and anon levels, sand castles on the seashore; was metamorphosed into a material world-soul and decked out with all the attributes of ideal Divinity; not merely with infinite power and transcendent wisdom, but with absolute goodness.

The consequences of this step were momentous. For if the cosmos is the effect of an immanent, omnipotent, and infinitely beneficent cause, the existence in it of real evil, still less of necessarily inherent evil, is plainly inadmissible. Yet the universal experience of mankind testified then, as now, that, whether we look within us or without us, evil stares us in the face on all sides; that if anything is real, pain and sorrow and wrong are realities.

It would be a new thing in history if *a priori* philosophers were daunted by the factious opposition of experience; and the Stoics were the last men to allow themselves to be beaten by mere facts. "Give me a doctrine and I will find the reasons for it," said Chrysippus. So they perfected, if they did not invent, that ingenious and plausible form of pleading, the Theodicy; for the

purpose of showing firstly, that there is no such thing as evil; secondly, that if there is, it is the necessary correlate of good; and, moreover, that it is either due to our own fault, or inflicted for our benefit. Theodicies have been very popular in their time, and I believe that a numerous, though somewhat dwarfed, progeny of them still survives. So far as I know, they are all variations of the theme set forth in those famous six lines of the "Essay on Man," in which Pope sums up Bolingbroke's reminiscences of stoical and other speculations of this kind—

"All nature is but art, unknown to thee;
All chance, direction which thou canst not see;
All discord, harmony not understood;
All partial evil, universal good;
And spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
One truth is clear: whatever is is right."

Yet, surely, if they are few more important truths than those enunciated in the first triad, the second is open to very grave objections. That there is a "soul of good in things evil" is unquestionable; nor will any wise man deny the disciplinary value of pain and sorrow. But these considerations do not help us to see why the immense multitude of irresponsible sentient beings, which cannot profit by such discipline, should suffer; nor why, among the endless possibilities open to omnipotence—that of sinless, happy existence among the rest—the actuality in which sin and misery abound should be that selected. Surely it is mere cheap rhetoric to call arguments which have never yet been answered by even the meekest and the least rational of Optimists, suggestions of the pride of reason. As to the concluding aphorism, its fittest place would be as an inscription in letters of mud over the portal of some "stye of Epicurus"; for that is where the logical application of it to practice would land men, with every aspiration stifled and every effort paralyzed. Why try to set right what is right already? Why strive to improve the best of all possible worlds? Let us eat and drink, for as to-day all is right, so to-morrow all will be.

But the attempt of the Stoics to blind themselves to the reality of evil, as a necessary concomitant of the cosmic process, had less success than that of the Indian philosophers to exclude the reality of good from their purview. Unfortunately, it is much easier to shut one's eyes to good than to evil. Pain and sorrow knock at our doors more loudly than pleasure and happiness; and the prints of their heavy footsteps are less easily effaced. Before the grim realities of practical life the pleasant fictions of optimism vanished. If this were the best of all possible worlds, it nevertheless proved itself a very inconvenient habitation for the ideal sage.

The stoical summary of the whole duty of man, "Live according to nature," would seem to imply that the cosmic process is an exemplar for human conduct. Ethics would thus become applied Natural History. In fact, a confused employment of the maxim, in this sense, has done immeasurable mischief in later times. It has furnished an axiomatic foundation for the

philosophy of philosophers and for the moralizing of sentimentalists. But the Stoics were, at bottom, not merely noble, but sane, men; and if we look closely into what they really meant by this ill-used phrase, it will be found to present no justification for the mischievous conclusions that have been deduced from it.

In the language of the Stoa, "Nature" was a word of many meanings. There was the "Nature" of the cosmos and the "Nature" of man. In the latter, the animal "nature," which man shares with a moiety of the living part of the cosmos, was distinguished from a higher "nature." Even in this higher nature there were grades of rank. The logical faculty is an instrument which may be turned to account for any purpose. The passions and the emotions are so closely tied to the lower nature that they may be considered to be pathological, rather than normal, phenomena. The one supreme, hegemonic, faculty, which constitutes the essential "nature" of man, is most nearly represented by that which, in the language of a later philosophy, has been called the pure reason. It is this "nature" which holds up the ideal of the supreme good and demands absolute submission of the will to its behests. It is this which commands all men to love one another, to return good for evil, to regard one another as fellow-citizens of one great state. Indeed, seeing that the progress towards perfection of a civilized state, or polity, depends on the obedience of its members to these commands, the Stoics sometimes termed the pure reason the "political" nature. Unfortunately, the sense of the adjective has undergone so much modification, that the application of it to that which commands the sacrifice of self to the common good would now sound almost grotesque.

But what part is played by the theory of evolution in this view of ethics? So far as I can discern, the ethical system of the Stoics, which is essentially intuitive, and reverences the categorical imperative as strongly as that of any later moralists, might have been just what it was if they had held any other theory; whether that of special creation, on the one side, or that of the eternal existence of the present order, on the other. To the Stoic, the cosmos had no importance for the conscience, except in so far as he chose to think it a pedagogue to virtue. The pertinacious optimism of our philosophers hid from them the actual state of the case. It prevented them from seeing that cosmic nature is no school of virtue, but the headquarters of the enemy of ethical nature. The logic of facts was necessary to convince them that the cosmos works through the lower nature of man, not for righteousness, but against it. And it finally drove them to confess that the existence of their ideal "wise man" was incompatible with the nature of things; that even a passable approximation to that ideal was to be attained only at the cost of renunciation of the world and mortification, not merely of the flesh, but of all human affections. The state of perfection was that "apatheia" in which desire, though it may still be felt, is powerless to move the will, reduced to the sole function of executing the commands of pure reason. Even this residuum of

activity was to be regarded as a temporary loan, as an efflux of the divine world-pervading spirit, chafing at its imprisonment in the flesh, until such time as death enabled it to return to its source in the all-pervading logos.

* * *

Modern thought is making a fresh start from the base whence Indian and Greek philosophy set out; and, the human mind being very much what it was six-and-twenty centuries ago, there is no ground for wonder if it presents indications of a tendency to move along the old lines to the same results.

We are more than sufficiently familiar with modern pessimism; at least as a speculation; for I cannot call to mind that any of its present votaries have sealed their faith by assuming the rags and the bowl of the mendicant Bhikku, or the cloak and the wallet of the Cynic. The obstacles placed in the way of sturdy vagrancy by an unphilosophical police have, perhaps, proved too formidable for philosophical consistency. We also know modern speculative optimism, with its perfectibility of the species, reign of peace, and lion and lamb transformation scenes; but one does not hear so much of it as one did forty years ago; indeed, I imagine it is to be met with more commonly at the tables of the healthy and wealthy, than in the congregations of the wise. The majority of us, I apprehend, profess neither pessimism nor optimism. We hold that the world is neither so good, nor so bad, as it conceivably might be; and, as most of us have reason, now and again, to discover that it can be. Those who have failed to experience the joys that make life worth living are, probably, in as small a minority as those who have never known the griefs that rob existence of its savour and turn its richest fruits into mere dust and ashes.

Further, I think I do not err in assuming that, however diverse their views on philosophical and religious matters, most men are agreed that the proportion of good and evil in life may be very sensibly affected by human action. I never heard anybody doubt that the evil may be thus increased, or diminished; and it would seem to follow that good must be similarly susceptible of addition or subtraction. Finally, to my knowledge, nobody professes to doubt that, so far forth as we possess a power of bettering things, it is our paramount duty to use it and to train all our intellect and energy to this supreme service of our kind.

Hence the pressing interest of the question, to what extent modern progress in natural knowledge, and, more especially, the general outcome of that progress in the doctrine of evolution, is competent to help us in the great work of helping one another?

The propounders of what are called the "ethics of evolution," when the "evolution of ethics" would usually better express the object of their speculations, adduce a number of more or less interesting facts and more or less sound arguments in favour of the origin of the moral sentiments, in the same way as other natural phenomena, by a process of evolution. I have little doubt, for my own part, that they are on the right track; but as the immoral sentiments have no less been evolved, there is, so far, as much natural sanction for

the one as the other. The thief and the murderer follow nature just as much as the philanthropist. Cosmic evolution may teach us how the good and the evil tendencies of man may have come about; but, in itself, it is incompetent to furnish any better reason why what we call good is preferable to what we call evil than we had before. Some day, I doubt not, we shall arrive at an understanding of the evolution of the æsthetic faculty; but all the understanding in the world will neither increase nor diminish the force of the intuition that this is beautiful and that is ugly.

There is another fallacy which appears to me to pervade the so-called "ethics of evolution." It is the notion that because, on the whole, animals and plants have advanced in perfection of organization by means of the struggle for existence and the consequent "survival of the fittest"; therefore men in society, men as ethical beings, must look to the same process to help them towards perfection. I suspect that this fallacy has arisen out of the unfortunate ambiguity of the phrase "survival of the fittest." "Fittest" has a connotation of "best"; and about "best" there hangs a moral flavour. In cosmic nature, however, what is "fittest" depends upon the conditions. Long since, I ventured to point out that if our hemisphere were to cool again, the survival of the fittest might bring about, in the vegetable kingdom, a population of more and more stunted and humbler and humbler organisms, until the "fittest" that survived might be nothing but lichens, diatoms, and such microscopic organisms as those which give red snow its colour; while, if it became hotter, the pleasant valleys of the Thames and Isis might be uninhabitable by any animated beings save those that flourish in a tropical jungle. They, as the fittest, the best adapted to the changed conditions, would survive.

Men in society are undoubtedly subject to the cosmic process. As among other animals, multiplication goes on without cessation, and involves severe competition for the means of support. The struggle for existence tends to eliminate those less fitted to adapt themselves to the circumstances of their existence. The strongest, the most self-assertive, tend to tread down the weaker.¹ But the influence of the cosmic process on the evolution of society is the greater the more rudimentary its civilization. Social progress means a checking of the cosmic process at every step and the substitution for it of another, which may be called the ethical process; the end of which is not the survival of those who may happen to be the fittest, in respect of the whole of the conditions which obtain, but of those who are ethically the best.

As I have already urged, the practice of that which is ethically best—what we call goodness or virtue—involves a course of conduct which, in all respects, is opposed to that which leads to success in the cosmic struggle for existence. In place of ruthless self-assertion it demands self-restraint; in place of thrusting aside, or treading down, all competitors, it requires that the individual shall not merely respect, but shall help his fellows; its influence is directed, not so much to the survival of the fittest, as to the fitting of as many as possible to survive. It repudiates the gladiatorial theory of existence. It demands that each man who enters into the enjoyment of the advantages of a polity shall

be mindful of his debt to those who have laboriously constructed it; and shall take heed that no act of his weakens the fabric in which he has been permitted to live. Laws and moral precepts are directed to the end of curbing the cosmic process and reminding the individual of his duty to the community, to the protection and influence of which he owes, if not existence itself, at least the life of something better than a brutal savage.

It is from neglect of these plain considerations that the fanatical individualism of our time attempts to apply the analogy of cosmic nature to society. Once more we have a misapplication of the stoical injunction to follow nature; the duties of the individual to the state are forgotten, and his tendencies to self-assertion are dignified by the name of rights. It is seriously debated whether the members of a community are justified in using their combined strength to constrain one of their number to contribute his share to the maintenance of it; or even to prevent him from doing his best to destroy it. The struggle for existence which has done such admirable work in cosmic nature, must, it appears, be equally beneficent in the ethical sphere. Yet if that which I have insisted upon is true; if the cosmic process has no sort of relation to moral ends; if the imitation of it by man is inconsistent with the first principles of ethics; what becomes of this surprising theory?

Let us understand, once for all, that the ethical progress of society depends, not on imitating the cosmic process, still less in running away from it, but in combating it. It may seem an audacious proposal thus to pit the microcosm against the macrocosm and to set man to subdue nature to his higher ends; but I venture to think that the great intellectual difference between the ancient times with which we have been occupied and our day, lies in the solid foundation we have acquired for the hope that such an enterprise may meet with a certain measure of success.

The history of civilization details the steps by which men have succeeded in building up an artificial world within the cosmos. Fragile reed as he may be, man, as Pascal says, is a thinking reed: there lies within him a fund of energy operating intelligently and so far akin to that which pervades the universe, that it is competent to influence and modify the cosmic process. In virtue of his intelligence, the dwarf bends the Titan to his will. In every family, in every polity that has been established, the cosmic process in man has been restrained and otherwise modified by law and custom; in surrounding nature, it has been similarly influenced by the art of the shepherd, the agriculturist, the artisan. As civilization has advanced, so has the extent of this interference increased; until the organized and highly developed sciences and arts of the present day have endowed man with a command over the course of non-human nature greater than that once attributed to the magicians. The most impressive, I might say startling, of these changes have been brought about in the course of the last two centuries; while a right comprehension of the process of life and of the means of influencing its manifestations is only just dawning upon us. We do not yet see our way beyond generalities; and we are befogged by the obtrusion of false analogies and

crude anticipations. But Astronomy, Physics, Chemistry, have all had to pass through similar phases, before they reached the stage at which their influence became an important factor in human affairs. Physiology, Psychology, Ethics, Political Science, must submit to the same ordeal. Yet it seems to me irrational to doubt that, at no distant period, they will work as great a revolution in the sphere of practice.

The theory of evolution encourages no millennial anticipations. If, for millions of years, our globe has taken the upward road, yet, some time, the summit will be reached and the downward route will be commenced. The most daring imagination will hardly venture upon the suggestion that the power and the intelligence of man can ever arrest the procession of the great year.

Moreover, the cosmic nature born with us and, to a large extent, necessary for our maintenance, is the outcome of millions of years of severe training, and it would be folly to imagine that a few centuries will suffice to subdue its masterfulness to purely ethical ends. Ethical nature may count upon having to reckon with a tenacious and powerful enemy as long as the world lasts. But, on the other hand, I see no limit to the extent to which intelligence and will, guided by sound principles of investigation, and organized in common effort, may modify the conditions of existence, for a period longer than that now covered by history. And much may be done to change the nature of man himself. The intelligence which has converted the brother of the wolf into the faithful guardian of the flock ought to be able to do something towards curbing the instincts of savagery in civilized men.

But if we may permit ourselves a larger hope of abatement of the essential evil of the world than was possible to those who, in the infancy of exact knowledge, faced the problem of existence more than a score of centuries ago, I deem it an essential condition of the realization of that hope that we should cast aside the notion that the escape from pain and sorrow is the proper object of life.

We have long since emerged from the heroic childhood of our race, when good and evil could be met with the same "frolic welcome"; the attempts to escape from evil, whether Indian or Greek, have ended in flight from the battle-field; it remains to us to throw aside the youthful over-confidence and the no less youthful discouragement of nonage. We are grown men, and must play the man

strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield,

cherishing the good that falls in our way, and bearing the evil, in and around us, with stout hearts set on diminishing it. So far, we all may strive in one faith towards one hope:

It may be that the gulfs will wash us down,
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,

. . . but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note may yet be done.

SCIENCE AS RELIGION¹

by Esmé Wingfield-Stratford

TO deny that every day and in every way material civilization was getting better and better, or at any rate fatter and fatter, would hardly have occurred to any ordinary person in the seventies. And yet—was everything so well as it seemed? What of the foundations? What of the informing spirit? It was disquieting that art should be showing a tendency to withdraw itself from life. But the majority of practical men probably thought, if they did not say, that life could get on well enough, at a pinch, without art. It was more disquieting that the certainties of religion should be called in question. But there was at least one rock upon which sensible men could build, and that rock was science.

It was, after all, science that had made modern progress what it was. Science—to use a phrase entirely appropriate in a commercial age—delivered the goods. She increased, visibly, measurably, and continuously, man's powers over the dead matter and blind energy of his environment. There was no nonsense about science. She did not draw cheques to be cashed post-mortem by the Bank of Heaven. She did not prescribe forms of prayer to attract depressions or break up anti-cyclones. She was the good fairy, whose gifts, in one brief century, had revolutionized human life. In an age of universal questioning her truth stood above question, her laws held good throughout the whole of infinite space.

Since the publication of that epoch-making book, Darwin's *Origin of Species*, science had displayed every sign of becoming not only a mode of knowledge, but a religion—the way, the truth and the life of the future. The attempt of the fundamentalist hierarchy to dictate to seekers after truth what precise sort of truth they were or were not to find, was followed by a counter-offensive of the triumphant scientists. Free thought, by a strange freak of language, became the label attached to a counter-orthodoxy, it being understood that thought was only free when it happened to flow in rationalistic channels. It became the fashion to look upon religion and science as if they were two rival faiths in perpetual conflict, an Ormuzd of dry light contending with an Ahriman of priestly darkness. On neither side was a spirit of sweet reasonableness much *en evidence*. I have heard an old Victorian clergyman, the kindest and best of men, confess that it was a pity he had never had the opportunity for one good running kick at Darwin. On the other side we have that austere Radical Mr. John Morley of Blackburn and the *Fortnightly Review*, carefully spelling God with a small "g",

¹ Reprinted from E. Wingfield-Stratford, *The Victorian Sunset*, copyright 1932, by permission of William Morrow & Co.

on the principle, as Mr. Justice Stephen surmised, that every little helps. Swinburne—an incongruous cavalier figure amid the grim ironsides who fought for the Unknowable—took advantage of the Ecumenical Council at Rome to shriek defiance at the priests and their God, and to sing,

“Glory to Man in the highest! for man is the maker of things!”

So far, the open conflict of science against religion was waged by an intelligentsia of latter-day Puritans. They were, in fact, more consistent Puritans than those of the Reformation, who had but exchanged the authority of Holy Church for that of Holy Scripture, and who forsook Leo of Rome to cling the closer to Jesus of Nazareth. But though they rejected the Victorian God, they had more than their share of Victorian respectability. Nothing would induce any of them to admit to so shameful a designation as that of atheist. Huxley, in 1869, coined the convenient term Agnostic. “The difference between an agnostic and an atheist,” as Professor Bury, a later freethinker, put it, “is that the atheist positively denies the existence of a personal God, the agnostic does not believe in it.”¹ Which, of course, made all the difference in the world, or, at any rate, in that part of the world that owned Victoria as Queen.

There is a curious similarity in the appearance of these Victorian Rationalists. The forehead is usually of noble proportions in striking contrast with the lower part of the face, whose pinched appearance, especially when accentuated by whiskers, suggests that the emotional development has been sacrificed to that of the intellect. But a glance is enough to convince the most prejudiced beholder that the freedom of these men stopped short at thought, and did not extend to their righteous and sober, if not—in the formal sense—godly lives. They were, in fact, thoroughly worthy specimens of the middle-class Englishman.

A state of conflict between religion and science is equally injurious for both. It brought the representatives of science out of the study and laboratory into the market-place; it taught them the arts of the rhetorician and journalist. Charles Darwin, one of the truest men of science that ever lived, refused to have part or lot in these controversies, and deplored that they should have troubled the peaceful world of science. But Huxley—great biologist though he was—was also a born fighter, and joyously assumed the office of Darwin’s bulldog. The bulldog is a noble animal—but hardly of the kind best fitted to typify the scientific temperament. Tyndall, Clifford, and other Rationalists, were not behind-hand in militancy. The result of conflict was inevitably to create a dogma that became more and more uncompromising for purposes of propaganda, and finally become simple enough to be proclaimed from soap-boxes in Hyde Park.

The effect was bad on the scientists themselves, for the atmosphere of conflict is fatal to that serene detachment of view, that perfect readiness to follow the truth wherever she leads, which is the first thing needful for the

¹ *A History of Freedom of Thought*, p. 214.

scientist. Its effect was almost equally bad upon the man in the street, for it made him see the achievement and aims of science in an utterly false perspective.

To this man in the street, the controversy about evolution assumed a wholly disproportionate importance. It was like Free Trade or Parliamentary Reform—something easy to understand and with a strong emotional appeal. Mr. Darwin had said that men were descended from monkeys—in one book of the time, by a heavily sarcastic clergyman, we have a picture of one of these supposed ancestors, with the body of a monkey and the head and beard of a typical man of the seventies. One hand, or paw, grasps a bottle—presumably of strong liquor. Darwin had not only insulted God by taking the job of creation off His hands, but also Man, by giving him an indefinitely great-grandfather called Jacko, which may explain, if it does not justify, the desire of the good man, to whom I have already referred, for a running kick at Darwin.

This booming and pillorying of Darwin shows a complete misunderstanding of that great man's achievement. From a scientific point of view, the origin of *homo sapiens* is a side issue of no special importance. What Darwin had accomplished was a veritable revolution in the science of biology. Owing to his patient research and brilliant generalization, the classification of species had been placed on a new, evolutionary basis—no biologist who followed him, whether he chose to call himself rationalist or fundamentalist, could build on any other foundations than those which Darwin had so well and truly laid.

The rumpus about Moses and monkeys had given the layman not only a distorted, but a partial view of scientific progress. Biology happened to be in the limelight, because it was possible to get an emotional kick out of it. But few people bothered about the equally important work that was being done in other fields of research, because abstruse and symbolically expressed calculations make poor reading. The day of the humble inventor, with little book-learning, but with a knowledge of machinery derived from practical experience of its handling, was waning to its close. The problems that now called for solution were those not of the workshop but the study. For every score of men who took sides for or against Darwin, scarcely one knew or cared about the wonderful work that was being done by men like Thomson (afterwards Lord Kelvin) and Clerk Maxwell in increasing Man's knowledge and control of the blind forces of nature. Even when life was enriched by such gifts as the submarine cable, the telephone, and the electric light, few of the beneficiaries had the least idea of the men and labour to which they were indebted. But the last thing these labourers would have wished was to emerge into the limelight. The conflict between religion and science might be waged in the field of biology—its echoes hardly penetrated to those of physical and mathematical science. Clerk Maxwell might elaborate Faraday's intuitions into formulæ—he would never have dreamed of being Faraday's, or anyone else's, bulldog.

Meanwhile science was continuously effecting the transformation of life. It might be a question whether Man was being more or less affected by art as the years went by, but there could be no question that Man was every year becoming a more scientific animal, or, at any rate, more dependent on the results of science. If we could put ourselves back even to mid-Victorian times, we should find daily life surprisingly crude and primitive, even among the rich and comfortable classes. This was especially the case in the now all-important matter of hygiene. The big bath was still a rare and sometimes a dangerous institution. It would probably be a large and luxurious addition to somebody's bedroom, into which the water oozed in some mysterious way from below. It drained off into the pipe from the nearest water closet, which was not invariably provided with a trap. What sweet influences percolated from the depths may be better imagined than described. I know of one instance where the occupant of such a room was in a state of chronic ill-health until the cause was at long last ascertained. It is not surprising that the cause of a good many deaths was summed up in the expressive word "drains."

In the same house, the drawing-room became inexplicably and intolerably noisome whenever the wind happened to be in a certain quarter. This was eventually found to be due to the fact that the "stink pipe" ran up the chimney stack, and that its effluvia were, under certain conditions, actually drawn down into the room.

Fresh air, particularly during the night, was a source of terror, and heroic efforts were made to keep it from human lungs. In the excellent series of household manuals to which I have already referred, the volume on the bedroom is written by one who proclaims herself to be an enthusiast for fresh air, but even she countenances the nocturnal sealing up of children, old people, and invalids. One bold device of hers for admitting air into the room, is that of boring a few holes with an awl into the door! Every sort of contrivance was in use for keeping any breath of untainted air from filtering between window-sashes, beneath doors, or down chimneys, and for producing a morning frowst of Herculean potency.

If this was so even in the stately homes of England, how much worse must have been the conditions in which the poor had to pig it together! I would quote, as one typical instance, that of the parish of Snodland, in Kent, where, in 1865, a dreadful epidemic of typhus had broken out. And no wonder, if we may trust the description of the parish priest, who appears, in this instance, to have been the most enlightened member of the community! "Men," he says, "build houses without wells and without drains; with open cesspools and with open drains; with the drains of one block of houses running under the open sinks of another block of houses, and sending their vapours through them; with closets in closest possible proximity to the houses, crowded and not cleaned for eighteen months at a time."¹

¹ *Maidstone Journal*, 30th November 1865.

And yet, next year, the local Board of Guardians rejected by one vote the proposition to appoint a sanitary inspector. For, as their chairman sapiently informed them, "there is no proof that disease is connected with stinks and smells. The London night men and cesspool cleaners are a very healthy race; their employment agrees with them. Again the cattle plague has not spared Lord Sydney and Lord Granville, where every precaution has doubtless been used, and I do not believe that the cholera would be kept off by any similar precautions."

But progress in such things was continuous, if not always rapid. The scientific spirit of the time had spread even to the politicians—Disraeli invented the slogan *Sanitas sanitatum, omnia sanitas*, and his Secretary, Assheton Cross, made a notable attempt to translate it into practice, particularly by his Artisans' Dwellings Act of 1875, which gave the opportunity for Joseph Chamberlain, as Mayor of Birmingham, to show what could be done by enlightened administration to transform Cobbett's "wens" into well-ordered and healthy cities in which men could have scope for living well.

Human life was being made progressively longer and safer, not only by public action, but by the giant strides that were being made in the healing art, and particularly by Lister's development of antiseptic surgery. The status of the doctor was greatly improved during Victoria's reign; he was no longer in danger of having it confounded with that of the old apothecary—which, by the way, had been the last word on the lips of the mortally stricken Wellington. But as late as the eighties occurred the trial of a certain Kentish rector, who, in addition to his ordinary duties to his flock, was in the habit of performing those of an unlicensed and unpaid general practitioner, and who finally succeeded, not by exhortation but prescription, in inducing one of them to join the angels. At the subsequent trial a sympathetic jury acquitted him, which was perhaps fortunate, as Mr. Justice Day made no secret of the severe line he would have been prepared to take.

Signs were already apparent that the discoveries of Faraday, and the work of Maxwell, Thomson, Herz, and others, in exploring the electro-magnetic field, were beginning to bear fruit. The Steam Age was beginning to merge into that of electricity. The telephone was invented in 1876, and in 1878 there was something like an incipient panic among the holders of gas shares, on account of the arrival of the electric light. This discovery seems to have created quite a sensation—to judge from the way it is exploited in *Punch*—though, as a matter of fact, it was quite a score of years before it made its way into anything like general use. At any rate it could still, in the middle of the nineties, account for the climax of the following description, in the school-boy's attempt at a novel, of "a room vieing with, nay, surpassing in splendour, the most magnificent chamber in any palace in the world. Nothing met the eye but the glitter of gold and sparkle of diamonds, the costliest hangings, the loveliest tapestry, the most exquisitely panelled ceiling, and"—the author having evidently reserved the choicest item in this

feast of typically ninetyish taste for the last—"the whole was lit by a magnificent electric light."¹

"Others abide our question, thou art free,"

might, during the second half of Victoria's reign, have been spoken not of Shakespeare, but of science. She, at least, might claim to be making the world every day and in every way better and better. She affected life in manifold and often unsuspected ways, ever more and more intimately, and always she was the kind fairy, the miracle-working genie at his master's beck and call. It is true that some of the old ecclesiastical guard kept up a rear-guard action against her advance. There were husbands and even doctors who drew the line against making things too easy for women in labour—a merciful Lord being supposed to have a sort of vested interest in their screams, and one remembers hearing old-fashioned people talking of the impious presumption of those who imagined they could defeat their Maker's plain intention by enabling men to fly like birds. But "the great social forces" of Gladstonian rhetoric were more and more obviously—except to Gladstone and a few fellow reactionaries—on the side of the scientists. The age was becoming more and more consciously scientific, and in fact, as Samuel Butler noted down, science was becoming daily more and more personified and deified. The time, he surmised, would come when it would be said that science had sent down his only begotten son, Darwin or Huxley, that those who believe in him, etc.

This new religion of science was fast acquiring a body of dogmatic belief, though its apostles—not being skilled in such matters—never succeeded in boiling it down to a creed. Nothing was God—everything was that new, blessed word evolution. The universe was a common-sense and plain-sailing affair to those who refrained from pushing inquiry too far into ultimate truths. Space was emptiness that went on for ever. Time likewise went on, and had gone on, for ever. Within these ample confines the game of evolution was played, with a few very simple materials. You had matter made up of little, hard, indivisible pills called atoms, of some four-score-and-ten assorted kinds and weights. You had energy, with a strange property of always dissipating itself in space, so that the universe was busily engaged, and presumably always had been, in burning itself out. There was gravitation, which gave every atom a tiny but measurable pull on every other atom. Why, was not clear, except that you had got to get the concern started somehow. Then life turned up at the appropriate moment, and though no scientist had so far succeeded in getting life into dead matter—except with the aid of an unsterilized receptacle—there was no doubt, among the faithful, that the feat had accomplished itself somehow in Archæan times, and that the ways and means of the transition would sooner or later be revealed. The

¹ Abstracted, by kind permission of the author, from *I Never Sleep*, a hitherto unpublished romance.

rest was just a matter of trust in Darwin and belief in the power of future scientists to clear up whatever was as yet unexplained in the theory.

If space, time, gravitation, life, energy, and all the different kinds of atoms had ever done anything so irregular as to sing together, that song would most appropriately have been the war-time chorus of:

“We’re here, because we’re here, because
We’re here, because we’re here!”

A nonsense universe, this, if we are to think in terms of ultimate or absolute truth, but a very convenient and perhaps necessary provisional sketch of the universe, in the existing state of knowledge. Scientists are quite right to work on the basis of the facts they have discovered, and not those that they believe may be discovered some day. And if the facts, up to date, do not provide a basis for a coherent or self-explanatory universe, the scientists must put up with the best makeshift they can get, just as primitive astronomers conducted their researches in a universe with the sun in the middle, or the first geographers found out as much as they could about a flat earth. The only danger about the method is when the makeshift gets taken a little too seriously, and, consciously or subconsciously, the nonsense hardens into a dogma, which, unless a man accepts whole and undefiled, he cannot be sane. For scientific fiction, through an indispensable servant, is of all masters the most tyrannous.

All would have been well, if the scientists had accepted the full implications of Huxley’s new word “Agnostic,” and confessed, like Newton, that they were but as children gathering pebbles on the shore of a boundless ocean of knowledge. But what the agnosticism of the *fin de siècle* amounted to in practice, was more like the faith supposed to be that of Dr. Jowett:

“Whatever there is to know I know it,
And what I don’t know isn’t knowledge.”

But the first lesson of evolution surely ought to have been how very dangerous it is for any generation to take its speculations on ultimate truth too seriously.

The deification of science prevented its worshippers from perceiving how perilously lopsided it had become. In all that concerned the knowledge and control of the outer world, its advance had been sensational beyond precedent. In what concerned the knowledge and control of Man himself, there had been scarcely the semblance of progress. Indeed, the tendency was to reduce thought and personality to a mere specialized function of matter, and to treat Man as if he were no more than a specially complicated piece of machinery, with his thoughts and actions as rigidly predetermined as the course of a planet. The psychology of the time was, for the most part, an indigestible re-hash of dead Panjandrum; sociology was the new fancy word for a long-winded paraphrase of each sociologist’s individual or class prejudices. Science was, in fact, too busy transforming Man’s environment to

have any serious thought of adapting Man to that transformation. In fact, she hardly recognized his existence, except as a not specially significant part of his own environment. But if there was anything to be learnt from evolution at all, it was that a species which, for any reason, fails to adapt itself to environment, dies. Which would appear to mean that science was very swiftly and effectively arranging for the extinction of the human species. Not that anybody, in that time of prosperity and progress, would have regarded such a statement as anything but a *reductio ad absurdum*.

Science was lopsided in another way. So convinced were its adherents of the all-sufficiency of their provisional universe, that they were almost incapable of receiving any facts or evidence that were plainly incapable of fitting into it. In 1868, for example, three eminently trustworthy witnesses, two of them peers, testified to having seen Mr. D. D. Home float out of one window, 70 feet above the street, and in at another. The feat was actually repeated, and the incident is as well testified to as anything can conceivably be. Again Professor Crookes, one of the greatest scientists of the day, conducted a number of experiments with a strange being calling itself Katie King, that appeared capable of materializing under certain conditions, and of whose genuineness the Professor convinced himself by the most searching tests. But these and a multitude of similar phenomena were either denied with contumely, or simply ignored. The open mind, supposed to be characteristic of the scientist, was almost invariably banged, barred and bolted in the face of such evidence. The rationalist entered a seance-room not to inquire but to expose, thus doing his bit for the inviolability of the neat and intelligible universe in which he chose to live. And, of course, there was plenty to expose, because these new phenomena, with which orthodox science refused to concern itself, became the special preserve of the fraud and charlatan, on the one hand, and, on the other, of uncritical enthusiasts, pathetically intent on the one object of reopening communication with their beloved dead, and as ready to be convinced of their existence as old Lady Tichborne of the identity of the Claimant with her lost son. Had the problem been approached with an honest determination to sift the true from the false and to follow the truth wherever it might have led, the conclusion might have emerged, not, perhaps, that the claims of the spiritualists were to be accepted at their face value, but that the universe was a far less simple affair than a mere working hypothesis would lead one to suppose, and that science, even towards the close of the nineteenth century, might be only scratching at the surface of reality.

We come back to the question—were the effects and tendencies of nineteenth-century science so unquestionably beneficent as almost everyone at the time assumed them to be? Merely to have asked such a question in the seventies would have been to invite doubts on one's seriousness or sanity—unless, indeed, one was championing the cause of that invincibly reactionary Potentate usually referred to as the Lord.

And yet, in 1872, there had been published a brilliantly witty satire on

modern life, bearing the title of *Erehwon*, or Nowhere, and written by the Samuel Butler whom we have already met as a blasphemer of scientific orthodoxy, but whom no one had ever accused of serving the Lord. This "Enfant Terrible of Literature" argued, through the mouth of an Erehwonian professor, the possibility that mankind would eventually sink into a state of contented but abject slavery to its machines. But then no one took Erehwonian professors, or even Butler himself, very seriously.

There were—as we have already hinted—more ominous possibilities still. Did it really go without saying that mankind was capable of controlling the vast powers of which it had suddenly possessed itself? A distribution of Rolls-Royces to infants or bombs to the inmates of an asylum would not necessarily be attended with pleasant consequences.

THE MORNING AFTER¹

by Paul D. Gesner

*Wireless to the Chicago Evening Press,
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PHILADELPHIA, Aug. 13—The lives of 6,000,000 persons in New York City and its suburbs were snuffed out yesterday afternoon at 2:50 o'clock when an air fleet of six hundred Coalition bombing planes laid a blanket of diphenyl chloroarsine and cacodyl isocyanide gas over Manhattan Island and the metropolitan area, killing every man, woman, child, beast, plant, and other living thing in New York City's five boroughs and their immediate environs.

More than 2,000,000 other persons were killed last night when winds bore diphenyl chloroarsine from New York City and scattered it over New Jersey and New York State communities immediately north and northeast of the metropolitan area.

Over 36,000,000 persons are reported

to have been killed by gas throughout the world in the past twelve hours.

New York, London, Paris, Calais, Brussels, Berlin, and Vienna are unpeopled cities to-day, for air raids took the lives of all their inhabitants yesterday afternoon and last evening.

Dispatches concerning the toll of lives in northern New Jersey, in New York State, and in European cities will be found in other columns of today's CHICAGO EVENING PRESS.

War between the nations of the Alliance and the Coalition came at 6:30 o'clock yesterday morning after five days of futile effort by governments of the world to arbitrate the Sage Harbor dispute. Neutrality of the United States in the controversy was maintained until early yesterday morning, although other nations of the world earlier aligned themselves in two combines, known as the Alliance and the Coalition. At four

¹ From the *Forum*. By permission of the Editor and the author.

o'clock yesterday morning when the recently-organized International Arbitration Court was informed by the nations of the Coalition that they would refuse to abide by the terms of the Court's decision in the Sage Harbor affair, the Congress of the United States voted to uphold the Court's decision and assist the nations of the Alliance in its enforcement.

War against the nations of the Coalition was declared by the Congress at 5:31 o'clock yesterday morning, after an all-night session. The President's War Message to Congress will be found elsewhere in the columns of this edition.

Gas Kills All in New York

Life does not exist in New York City to-day. Its millions of inhabitants lie dead—their lungs burned away by diphenyl chloroarsine dropped from Coalition planes in the air raid.

Frank Carson, plane pilot, and this correspondent, wearing safety masks and carrying nine hours' supply of oxygen in iron bottles strapped to our waists, landed in an airplane in Central Park, New York City, at 7:28 o'clock this morning. For seven hours we tramped through New York's streets and in and out of New York's buildings. We saw no living person. The air is still heavy with gas. There is little question but that all persons in New York City are dead. Yesterday 6,000,000 persons walked and talked and laughed and lived in the city we have just wandered through. To-day 6,000,000 bodies lie lifeless upon the streets and in the buildings.

Bodies are piled thickest at Broad and Wall Streets, though they are

stacked five and six feet deep in disheveled piles before the entrances of all the great buildings in the financial district. There are probably 1,500,000 bodies strewn on the sidewalks and pavements, and in the offices below, City Hall Park.

No Warning Given

Evidently no warning of the raid was given, even at the Stock Exchange, where the best telegraph facilities kept members in close contact with what was happening throughout the world. Bodies blocked the entrance to the Exchange building and to the trading floor, but Carson and this correspondent pulled some of them aside and were able to force their way into the building. We walked across the floor over the bodies of hundreds of men who never knew what had happened until the gas seeped in through the windows. One man who apparently had become hysterical when he felt the gas at his throat, had swung his arms and broken the crystal of his wrist watch. The time registered on the watch's battered face was 2:59 o'clock. As the six hundred attacking planes dropped their first diphenyl chloroarsine at 2:50 o'clock, it may be safely estimated that all persons at ground level in Manhattan died within a dozen minutes after the raid started. The gas apparently fell like a blanket over the entire island.

Financial System Gone

It can be said with absolute accuracy and without overstatement that the United States to-day has no financial system, structure, or organization. All workers, from officials to messenger

boys, are dead at the New York Stock Exchange, the New York Curb Exchange, the produce exchanges, the Federal Reserve Bank, the other New York banks and their branches, the clearing houses, the brokerage houses, and the other manifold units through which money moved before the air raid.

All of the City's Financial Leaders Are Dead

The body of the President of the New York Stock Exchange lies beside his desk. He put a handkerchief before his nose and lips in an effort to stave off the gas. He died clamping the handkerchief against his face in a futile attempt to stave off the most deadly fumes yet used in warfare.

Lifeless as a great tomb are the halls of the Federal Reserve Bank. The high-ceilinged, massive chamber with soft carpets where sat the men who watched and regulated the flow of gold betwixt the Bank's vaults and the banking institutions throughout the Federal Reserve System, are dark and gloomy and lifeless as the ruins of the abandoned temple of a lost civilization. A body is slumped over each desk in the Bank—gone are the men who were the directing geniuses of the New York Federal Reserve unit.

Within the entrance of the Federal Reserve Bank a guard, with his gun clutched in one hand, lies sprawled upon the floor. He is dead, as are all persons in the greatest of cities. Gold and currency representing hundreds of millions of dollars are unguarded at the bank. Unguarded—except by the gas which fills the air

of all New York. No man, no living thing can breathe that gas and live.

Flames Consume East Side

The lower East Side is being consumed by flames.

The murky skies are tinged with red flame and black smoke. Though only diphenyl chloroarsine and other gases were dropped by the attacking airmen yesterday afternoon, fires started in several places on the East Side shortly after the raid. Water boilers burst after the men attending them had died from gas poisoning. Illuminating gas mains were disjointed and high voltage wires short-circuited by the boiler explosions. In musty cellars where "lighting" gas pipes and electric wire trunks came out of their underground conduits, a thousand fires were started simultaneously on the East Side.

To-day, however, there is but one fire, and that is the blazing inferno thirty-six blocks square which will eventually consume every wooden structure in lower New York. Only when the fire reaches the districts in which there are fireproof buildings of concrete and steel—then only will the flames die out. Nothing will remain of the lower East Side, save the charred ruins of a community destroyed—a broken brick wall here and a steel electric light pole there—to mark the ground which was once one of the most thickly populated areas in the world.

To-day, the flames leap half again as high as the buildings which they are consuming, and the ends of their tongues fairly lick the low ceiling of smoky clouds. Now and then a deafening explosion comes to the ears as

an illuminating gas reservoir gives way before the heat. Now and then there is a low rumbling and a quaking of the earth, as a wall tumbles downward in a pile of blackened and half-burned bricks.

At least four million bodies will have to be removed from the streets of New York and from its buildings before the city can again be inhabited. Six million bodies would have had to be removed, had there been no fire on the East Side. The bodies of the two million East Siders who died yesterday by gas are to-day being consumed by flames, and only ashes and bones will remain when the fire has spent its force. The bodies of the two million inhabitants of the Bowery, of the Ghetto, of Little Italy, of Chinatown, and of the other tiny national capitals in Manhattan are being turned into cinders to-day by the very flames which are consuming East Side homes, shops, warehouses, wharves, schools, and churches.

That is the picture of lower New York to-day—the West Side from the Battery to City Hall Park stark and silent in death; and the East Side, from the fish markets of lower South Street to lower midtown, crackling in an all-consuming and unquenchable fire that carries all before it.

Bomb Hits Trinity

Trinity Church, at the Broadway end of Wall Street, was one of the few buildings in the financial district damaged in the air raid. The raiding airmen dropped no explosives—gas only—but one of the great “cans” or bombs in which the deadly diphenyl chloroarsine was dropped, struck the steeple of Trinity Church

squarely. Apparently the steeple wobbled, then fell eastward. The stone of which it was constructed is broken and scattered on the pavement of Broadway. One chunk of the steeple lies half-imbedded in the surface of the street, and there is a jagged hole four feet in diameter in the pavement where another portion broke through the street’s surface and dropped onto the subway track or into the sewer main below.

The raiding airmen sought not to destroy property, but to destroy life. The guiding military heads of the Coalition knew that the destruction of life would do more to cripple New York and the nation than the mere dropping of explosives upon the city’s structures.

Times Men Worked to the End

The editorial department of the *New York Times*, on the third floor of the Times Annex Building in West Forty-third Street, was in perfect order to-day—save for the fact that the editors, rewrite men, copy readers, reporters, office boys, and other employees were slumped dead in their chairs. Apparently work was continued in the Times offices up to the minute that the diphenyl chloroarsine seeped into the great city room. All windows had been closed, and all staff men had worked up to the moment when the gas began burning away their nasal membranes and lung tissues.

Two dispatches which lay on one of the desks gave information concerning the first reports of the coming raid. The first of the two, with a yesterday’s date-line, read:

“The crews of the three Coalition

airplane carriers, EK-6, FK-8, and LX-16, carriers having facilities for carrying two hundred bombing planes each, were picked up on the sea in open lifeboats sixty miles off Nantucket early to-day, and captured as prisoners of war by destroyers of the North Atlantic Division of the United States fleet.

"A squadron of United States Navy planes on patrol sighted the three airplane carriers from an altitude of 11,000 feet. The planes, upon dropping to a lower altitude, noticed that the crews of the airplane carriers were taking to open boats. When U. S. destroyers, summoned by wireless from the air patrol, arrived, the three airplane carriers, decks awash, were on their way to the bottom of the sea.

"Questioning of the captured seamen revealed that the crews had opened the sea cocks and scuttled all three ships. United States naval officers believe that at least six hundred bombing planes were put into the air before the carriers were scuttled, and that these six hundred planes, loaded with gas or explosives, may be at present flying towards New York.

"It is believed by naval officers that the airplane carriers were scuttled to prevent their seizure, and to give a convoy of Coalition warships time to steam away and escape open battle. United States destroyers and planes are searching for the enemy cruisers and destroyers which are now believed to have escorted the carriers to American waters."

Apparently the Coalition directed its airmen to fly to the objective, New York City, drop gas bombs in accordance with the plan of the offensive,

then fly to open country if possible, burn their planes, surrender, and be interned.

The second dispatch of special significance, found in the news rooms of the *New York Times*, was an "official government release," and read:

"New York is fully prepared for any air attack which the enemy Coalition powers may attempt, the War Department announced to-day.

"Reveille blew at four A.M. this morning at the Governor's Island barracks, and in every military post in the Second Corps Area of the U. S. Army men were aroused from their bunks at this same early hour. A successful combat with a mythical air fleet, which was theoretically staging a mock air raid, was held.

"Hundreds of rounds were fired from the Army's new anticraft guns, which are improved models of the latest design. At the conclusion of the mock battle, officers expressed their approval of the city's first line of defense.

"A new secret anti-aircraft gun, said to be the most powerful weapon of the type yet developed by the government, was given its first test in this morning's practice. The new gun is equipped with a special range finder which is said to make the weapon the most accurate large-bore anti-craft rifle yet conceived by man."

A weather report found on one of the news desks at the *Times* revealed that a low, wet, dripping fog hung over Manhattan at 2:50 o'clock yesterday afternoon, when the first bombs in the air raid were dropped. The fog is thought to have rendered helpless the anti-aircraft defense batteries of the Army, and made useless the

naval anti-aircraft guns on United States warships outside the Narrows.

Apparently the six hundred enemy bombing planes which participated in the air raid flew "blind" and dropped their diphenyl chloroarsine by instrument.

Mayor of New York Dead

The Mayor of New York was in conference with city officials in his private office in City Hall when bombs began dropping. Apparently those in the Mayor's private chamber knew three or four minutes before they breathed in the lethal gas, that there was no escape. The Mayor, pencil in hand, was drawing little curlicues on a piece of paper as one does while waiting for a telephone connection to be put through, when the gas struck him. The pencil still clutched in his hand, he died with his head on both arms resting on the table before him.

Many Died in Churches

Many persons rushed to churches for prayer or safety, when the raid started. Though it was a week-day, and though no special services were being held, there were approximately 1,500 dead in Trinity Church, where the steeple was toppled by a gas bomb; 2,000 dead in St. Patrick's Cathedral on Fifth Avenue at Fifty-first Street; 1,200 dead in the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church on Fifth Avenue at Fifty-fifth Street; 1,400 dead in Temple Emanu-El on Fifth Avenue at Sixty-fifth Street; and 800 dead in the Riverside Church on Riverside Drive at 122nd Street. The dead in all of the churches were of many races, colors, and creeds, and

the majority of the number in each church died kneeling in prayer.

In an operating room at St. Luke's Hospital a doctor lay dead on the floor beside the operating table, a scalpel still clutched in his hand. The patient apparently had died from the effects of diphenyl chloroarsine while still under ether.

In the emergency ward at the hospital, one interne was cleaning hardened wax from a workman patient's ears when the gas struck them both. Another interne was studying a medical book when the gas came. The book he was studying was opened to a chapter on adrenalin, and its uses as a heart stimulant to start life processes in new-born babies.

Columbia President Dead

The President of Columbia University lay dead on the steps of the Columbia University Library on 116th Street, just off Broadway. The President's office was in the library building. Aroused by the rushing of students through the streets, and by the roar of the six hundred planes hidden in the fog over the city, he had stepped outside shortly before a gas bomb struck the cornice of the Law Building, a short distance away, and exploded. His death may have been caused by a flying fragment.

Children Died in Schools

The overwhelming mass of New York's young people died in the public schools. The raid started but a few minutes before classes would have been let out for the day.

In the public school on the corner of Sixty-third Street and Central Park West, the teacher in one class-room

apparently had read a story aloud, and directed the children—all of them under ten years of age—to write the words of the story on a piece of paper as she spoke them. There were thirty-one children in the room. Thirty-one copies of the story the teacher read lay unfinished on the children's desks. Each child had continued writing, it appeared, until he or she had been choked by the gas. Every child except one sat with head and arms resting on his or her desk, as if in sleep. The thirty-first child, a little girl, was in the arms of the teacher, who evidently had gone to comfort her when she became frightened as the gas poured in the window.

The subways of New York are jammed with bodies and stalled trains. At Times Square this correspondent tried to enter several kiosks, but the entrances were so choked with dead forms that it was impossible to get down the steps. At 103rd Street and Broadway, on the Broadway-Seventh Avenue line of the I.R.T., he was able to crawl down the stairs over the bodies and reach the subway uptown platform. A train was stalled there, and its doors were open. Persons were still trying to push through and get aboard when overcome by the gas, evidently believing the train would carry them to safety. They knew that the deadly gas was coming from the skies, and believed that safety would be found further uptown in less congested parts of the city.

Rail Terminals Clogged

Confusion reigned in the rail terminals when the gas bombs began dropping.

The floor of the lobby of the Grand Central Station was in disorder to-day. Bodies were scattered over the polished stone floors, and there were great piles of corpses about the train gates on both the upper and lower levels. The "red cap" porters worked on to the end. One of them, near the gates, died guarding a pair of traveling bags and two sets of golf clubs he was about to take to a waiting train. Another, near the information booth, lay dead over an old-fashioned telescope, three newspaper-wrapped packages, and a lady's umbrella.

An equal number of bodies were strewn over the floor of the Pennsylvania Station. The Long Island Station was so blocked with corpses that this correspondent found it impossible in some places to walk on the floor. The crowd had surged to the gates and down the steps to the train platforms when they noticed the gas in the air. As the gas was evidently heavier at lower levels, many of these persons died on the flights of steps down to the loading platforms. Hundreds of bodies were piled at the bottoms of the train shed stairways, and there they were five and six feet deep—so deep the hand rails along the stairs were obscured by them.

At the Hudson Terminal, ticket boxes were overturned at the train gates through which travelers pass to reach the tube trains. The gray-uniformed station attendants had tried in vain to keep the crowds orderly, and their bodies lay trampled and crushed with those of the persons they had tried to calm. Several had fallen to the tracks in the rush.

Some May Live in Skyscrapers

If there are any persons alive on Manhattan to-day, those persons are cowering at this moment in the upper stories of the Empire State Building, the Chrysler Tower, the Woolworth Building, the Metropolitan Tower, and other high structures. Possibly the gas did not seep into some of the offices high above the streets. Carson and this correspondent tried to start the elevators in the Empire State, Chrysler, and Woolworth buildings, but there was no electric power. We did not have sufficient oxygen, nor the time, to climb the stairs of these tall buildings. We climbed seven stories in the Woolworth Building and found only dead bodies—no life of any kind. Then we abandoned our climb because of the few precious hours our oxygen allotted us.

Central Park Desolate

Central Park is dead and dismal. The enemy's gases killed every tree, every bush, every blade of grass. When we landed in our plane in the Park early this morning, the leaves on the trees and the stretches of carefully mowed lawn had lost their freshness. Overnight, since the dropping of the gases, they had turned a dark brown color. As we took off this afternoon, leaving the City of the Dead which was once New York behind us, the foliage of the bushes, the tree leaves, and the grasses had deepened considerably in color, and were almost black. Bark was dropping from the limbs of trees, and the leaves were beginning to fall. But there were no leaves on the ground. As the leaves were whisked from the branches by

the wind, they cracked into small pieces and fell to the ground in dusty swirls, like coarse, black flakes of soot.

For safety's sake, we both waited until our plane had climbed out of Central Park to a height of 4,000 feet before taking off our oxygen masks. As we started breathing in the clean, clear air of that altitude, I took from my pocket a column proof-sheet I had picked off a spike in one of the many New York newspaper offices we had visited. The proof-sheet was of an editorial which would have appeared in a New York newspaper to-day, had not New York City's life been taken by gas yesterday. I smiled as I glanced through the editorial. It was titled "Isolation," and read in part:

"Our nation is indeed fortunate to be in an isolated position, now that war has been declared. The Commander of the Second Corps Area has informed the President of the United States that New York's air defense is perfected, and that there is absolutely no danger of invasion.

"With oceans flanking our east and west shores, any attack by the enemy would have to be directed from a great distance. Because of the thousands of miles of water which would have to be traversed by enemy planes before they could begin an offensive against us, any such movement on the part of our foes would be made not with the plan of destroying lives or property, but merely with the idea of injuring the morale of the American people. Americans, however, are hewn of tough timber, and it takes more than the buzzing of airplane motors to depress the American spirit. Let the enemy attack. . . ."

I smiled once more. The writer of that piece should have said:

"There is no defense against an attack by airplanes. There is no defense against an air attack by a power willing to pay the price in airplane carriers, planes, and men, and willing to watch the weather reports and wait for the cover of a protecting fog. A thousand anti-aircraft guns for every attacking plane, and a dozen defensive planes for every gas-laden attacking craft can't stop a correctly planned air offensive."

Oh, well. Let the editorial writers write the editorials!

Carson shouted back through the speaking tube that we would be in Philadelphia in eighteen minutes. The grim desolation that was once New York was almost out of sight in the distance. Up in that clear, bright atmosphere the horrors of the past few hours seemed a nightmare. I unstrapped my typewriter, put it on my knees, and started writing this story.

FIFTEEN YEARS AFTER¹

*An address delivered on behalf of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
on Saturday, November 11, 1933*

by Nicholas Murray Butler

MY Fellow-Americans: This day fifteen years ago was one of exaltation both intellectual and spiritual. The Great War, greatest of all wars, had come to a sudden end. Throughout the world men raised their streaming eyes to heaven and with broken voices gave thanks to Almighty God that the four full years of slaughter and of murder, of devastation of vast areas of the earth's surface and of demolition of tens of thousands of homes as well as historic monuments of highest worth, of destruction of trade and commerce in almost every land and between all lands, had finished. Everywhere it was sternest resolve that nothing of this sort should ever be permitted to happen again. As was finely written in the London *Times* of the day following the Armistice: "The 'Cease fire' of yesterday must be final and universal."

President Woodrow Wilson then said to the Congress of the United States: "The great nations which associated themselves . . . have now definitely united in the common purpose to set up such a peace as will satisfy the longing of the whole world for disinterested justice, embodied in settlements which are based upon something much better and more lasting than the selfish competitive interests of powerful States. There is no longer conjecture as to the objects the victors have in mind. They have a mind in the matter not only, but a heart

¹ By permission of the author.

also. Their avowed and concerted purpose is to satisfy and protect the weak as well as to accord their just rights to the strong." This pledge was given to the American people by their President. This pledge was accepted by the American people and given by them to the whole world. What has happened in these fifteen years?

First and foremost, the treaties of Versailles, of St. Germain and of Trianon, on which the war settlements were based, were, with the exception of one vitally important provision for the organization of a society of nations, dictated by a spirit which persisted in dwelling upon a world that was past and which could not, or would not, look in the face the world upon which man was about to enter. This was, as General Smuts has succinctly stated, not the fault of any one man or any group of men, for it was the spirit of man itself which failed at Versailles. The spirit of man as then and there voiced could not rise, and did not rise, to the great emergency with which it stood face to face. Except for the Covenant of the League of Nations written into the Treaty of Versailles as its Part I, this treaty and those which followed it were an endeavor to continue and to maintain an outworn system of political, social and economic organization which regarded nations as armed competitors, suspicious of each other, ready at any temptation to enter into agreements against one another, and turning their backs steadily and completely upon those moral obligations which civilization imposes upon every people, old or young, east or west, democratic or imperial. In Part V of the Treaty of Versailles it was written that Germany, the chief among the defeated nations, was to undertake strictly to observe carefully drawn military, naval and air-armament restrictions "in order to render possible the initiation of a general limitation of the armaments of all nations." This was a solemn contract between the allied and associated powers which had won the war and Germany and her allies which had lost the war. What has been done to execute and to enforce this contract made before the whole world and written in the interest of the whole world?

Today, fifteen years after, more money wrung from overburdened and impoverished taxpayers is being expended upon armaments and preparations for war than ever before in peace-time history. The solemn obligations of governments, as so definitely and so hopefully written into the Protocol of the Locarno Conference in 1925 and into the Pact of Paris for the renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy in 1927-8, are, we are cynically told, of no consequence. Of course the whole world has renounced war as an instrument of national policy, but what of that? Why should a government be expected to keep its word if it thinks it would be to its advantage to break it? Each government, it is urged by the militarist and naval lobbies in every capital and by the munition-makers and their allies among politicians and in the press, must be kept in position to defend itself and it can not defend itself unless it is ready to prevent an attack by attacking first on its own part. This is the cruel, the stupid and the irrational argument by which hundreds of millions of dollars and pounds and francs are taken from a country's income and

poured out upon favored militaristic classes and munition-makers as doles for the maintenance of the one and for the profits of the other. How long will the public opinion of civilized man stand this sort of thing? Should another war come—which God forbid—every munition-maker, every military and naval lobbyist, every politician and every journalist who has expounded and defended this incredibly false doctrine might well be carried to the place of greatest danger and left there in order that he may learn for himself, and not merely by the testimony of widows and orphans and stricken parents, what that mass-murder which is called war really means.

Just think of it being possible, after their literally stupendous services to their peoples and to mankind, that the grave of Stresemann should be desecrated in Berlin and the memory of Briand sneered at in Paris.

There are even left among us international lawyers of repute who keep on repeating the old nineteenth century formulas quite regardless of the fact that the conditions which gave rise to them and upon which they rested have gone and gone forever. These men still talk about sovereignty and sovereign nations. There is no sovereign nation in the sense that a nation may do just as it chooses in respect to anything whatsoever. Every nation is under limitation to be accountable to be judged by the world's public opinion in terms of the moral law which civilization accepts. It is the moral law which is sovereign and not any government. These men still talk of neutrality. There neither is, nor can longer be, any such thing as neutrality among the sixty signatories to the Pact of Paris, since a breach of that Pact by a declaration of war on the part of any one of them means breaking faith with every other signatory whether it be attacked on the field of battle or not.

My fellow-citizens, the fundamental trouble is that, while the order "Cease fire" was obeyed fifteen years ago on the field of battle, it has not been obeyed in the hearts and minds of men or in the policies of their governments. In spirit and in truth, nations are still at war, although their weapons at the moment are not submarines and airships, long-range cannon and poison-gas. Their weapons are suspicion, greed, discrimination, sneering cynicism, the instilling of lack of confidence and the extolling of the military and combative spirit. That war which was military is now in large part economic, and the destruction due to this latter long-continued war is rapidly mounting to the measure of the destruction due to the military contest which ended fifteen years ago.

There is one, and only one, path of progress. There is one, and only one, escape from the appalling situation which now surrounds us. And that is a most simple one; namely, that men and governments should keep their word, that their acts should be true to their plighted faith. This is so obvious that there is and should be no mystery about it. Keep the disarmament pledge of the Treaty of Versailles. Keep the Protocol of Locarno in letter and in spirit. Keep the Pact of Paris in honesty and in truth. To do these things would be immediately to restore confidence among men, and it is upon confidence and confidence only that national security can rest, be the nation great or small.

Arms and fortifications and battle-ships and poison-gas can not bring security. They only bring and invite insecurity, attack, destruction and death. We need no armies and navies other than those which constitute an adequate and effective police force. The object of the world of tomorrow is an equality of rights for all nations, great and small, old and young, in a régime of security. This, let me repeat, can only be built on a foundation of confidence, and that confidence must be both intellectual and moral and find its expression in international cooperation, international understanding and international helpfulness.

It is our solemn duty to strengthen the Permanent Court of International Justice at The Hague and to point to it day in and day out as the world's highest organization for the peaceful settlement of international differences. The withholding of our own formal governmental participation in the organization and work of this Court by a handful of obstructionist senators at Washington has become a national and an international scandal.

We must strengthen and support the work of the League of Nations at Geneva and point to it as the chief organ of international consultation which from year to year can keep before it the world's needs and the world's problems.

We must point to the Bank for International Settlements at Basel as that organization which stands ready to lead the way in offering a permanent and a just solution of the financial problems which are vexing our own nation and other nations, by treating these, as they must be treated, not as national but as international, not as local or even continental, but as world-wide.

An extraordinary happening fifteen years after Armistice Day is the extent to which men, even intelligent men, have failed, and are failing, to understand the problems of the moment and are throwing the weight of their words and their influence on the side of a policy of reaction which, if carried to its logical end, can only mean the destruction of our civilization. We are told, even by men who should know much better, that international understanding and international cooperation are doomed as a method of solving the world's problems and that whether we like it or not we must turn back to political and economic nationalism with all its selfishness, all its competitive bitterness and all its certainty of suicide. The voices of dedication and of aspiration which were so gladly heard fifteen years ago are now laughed at and scouted. The stern realist of today and tomorrow is taunted with vain and vague idealism by him who was far behind the reality of the times even yesterday. The challenge to the open-minded, the liberal and the constructive citizen of the United States and of any land is imperative and must be dauntlessly accepted.

This is no time for pessimism or despair. Fifteen years after the Armistice is the moment to strike the note of courage, of hope and of determination. Public opinion holds the world in its hand. It can compel governments to do its bidding. Let us once and for all turn our backs upon the defeatists, upon those who sneer and smile at our efforts to strengthen the peace of the world, to promote international cooperation and to raise human happiness and satisfaction to new and unexplored heights. Let us repeat with all heartiness and sincerity these words of an English poet of our own day:

We've stood the test of war; we "saw it through";
 But peace, it seems, is harder to pursue—
 At least for those who, at each check we meet,
 Clamour for frank admission of defeat;
 And this new challenge, Hitler's flung-down glove,
 Gives our defeatists just the chance they love.
 "Break up the Conference, own your dreams were vain,
 Get back once more to solid earth again;
 Back to the old suspicion, fear, intrigue.
 Scrap the Locarno Treaties, scrap the League;
 Scrap every hope of closing Europe's ranks;
 Scrap everything, in short, save bombs and tanks;
 Content, if war should wipe us from the slate,
 To lay the blame not on ourselves but Fate."
 So runs the plea of those who'll boast at need
 The war-like virtues of "the bulldog breed"
 That, stubbornly refusing to confess
 Its failures, from disaster wrung success.
 We've stood the test of war; we saw it through
 In Flanders mud as once at Waterloo:
 Is peace less worth an effort to pursue?

YOUNG MEN IN POLITICS¹

by Wilbur Cross

WHEREVER I go I find young college graduates intensely interested in the social and political affairs of Soviet Russia. If the subject comes up, as it generally does, in the talk at an informal gathering, the discussion at once becomes animated. Their remarks show that they are reading newspaper reports, magazine articles, and books dealing with Russian issues eagerly and thoughtfully. But when the conversation turns to American politics, the tone, until very recently, has at once changed. The life has gone out of it. Evidently they have not followed the speeches of our public leaders as they have followed those of Stalin. They have been inclined to treat the latest scandals in our municipal governments with boredom or cynicism. "Lousy" has been their word for the whole business.

Why is this so? Why is it that every summer increasing numbers of intelligent, alert young Americans take the fairly arduous and expensive trip to Moscow to see what is going on there and yet show so little desire to learn at first hand what is going on in Washington? I do not for a moment think

¹ From *The Forum*. By permission of the Editor and the author.

that it is because they are all converts to Communism—or ever really expect to become converts. The answer is not so simple as that.

I believe that behind the enthusiasm among recent college graduates for visiting Russia is, first of all, the fact that they have been assured a warm welcome. Young people have always been peculiarly sensitive about going where they are not wanted, and the youth of our day, for all their confident air and loud talk, are no exceptions to this rule. By extensive and clever propaganda and by special facilities provided for sight-seeing, the Soviet Government makes young foreign tourists feel that they are wanted in Moscow to-day. And it assumes, apparently quite rightly, that they wish to learn something of the social and political life of the country as well as of its museums and picture galleries.

Again, the young are naturally empiricists, and their school and college training in the scientific laboratories, in the courses in history or economics or sociology, if it has meant anything at all to them, has deepened their interest in experimentation. Now, whatever one may think of it, the fact is that a tremendous political-social experiment is being conducted at this moment in Russia. The whole country is obviously a vast laboratory. Its present rulers lose no opportunity to advertise the novelty and boldness of their effort. The fundamental premise of the entire structure is that this is a changing world and that they are the first to give effect and direction to the new movement of post-war life.

It is easy to see why, from this point of view, Russia exerts a fascination over young Americans fresh from their studies of civilization or science as a process of evolution. Nothing is further from my intention here than to present a brief for the Soviet Government. It may well be that experiments, social or economic, if not political, are now afoot in this country that will have a greater influence on history than anything that is happening in Russia. My point merely is that, if this is the case, they have not been effectively presented to the younger generation as vital or novel issues either in the speeches of our public men or in our conventional party platforms.

And this brings me to another reason for the vividness of the young American's interest in Russia. There is no question that, all superficial signs to the contrary in this year of grace, youth is still a period of crusading. The early twenties are a time of no compromise, of ardent loyalties and equally ardent prejudices. One does not have to be a professional psychologist to detect in the casual indifference or cynicism of many of the remarks one hears or overhears from young Americans the working of a defense mechanism resorted to in order to conceal positive interest or emotion. The attempt at casualness is too pointed. Even the bored and skeptical "Yeah?" which Miss Ferber has pronounced the keyword in the speech of young America, may hide a genuine spark of inquiry.

However this may be, the Russian Communists are engaged in a crusade for a program stated in no negative or uncertain terms, for which their leaders are fighting with every ounce of their energy. No one can get the impression

that all groups or parties there have much the same middle-of-the-road principles at bottom or that Communist leaders fail to lead. And it is this aspect of Soviet Russia, I think, which most attracts young visitors to-day. They are made to feel in Moscow that the business of government is alive and serious, and that it is also the business of youth.

How is it with us? Let us picture the candidates who, having completed their courses in economics, history, and social science, come up for degrees each June at our colleges and universities. I have listened with thousands of them to Commencement addresses. The speaker emphasizes the duty of each graduate to take an active and enlightened part in public life. Perhaps he quotes the words of Cicero that the completion of all knowledge lies in its application to the affairs of state. If he does not, he generally expresses the same idea.

What happens as a result of all this? Usually nothing. When the college graduate returns to his home, he finds that the older men whose intelligence and integrity he most admires are "not in politics." They speak of politics as a "hopeless" or "dirty" game. They discourage any incipient desire the young citizen may have to take an active part in municipal affairs, where he would naturally expect to make a beginning. The newspapers bear out their comment. Unless he has a great deal of money which may be tapped for party funds, or some exceptional personal connection with a man in office, no party leader makes any overtures to him, much less seeks him out. And so he goes his way. During a recent state campaign, a number of young college men came to me and said that they would like to do something, but they did not want to "butt in." Rightly or wrongly, they had got the fixed impression that their services might not be welcome. They had no information at hand about the proper way of offering them.

Suppose the young college man is unusually aggressive and tries to push his way into the public life of the community. In that case, he is confronted by political organizations more closely knit than formerly for their own purposes. This is particularly true of state governments. Ordinarily the chairman himself holds no public office; but his control of his party's organization is absolute and undisputed, and sometimes relentless. He must be shrewd and astute; but beyond that he need not be overintelligent. His job is to win elections, not so much in the interest of the public welfare as in the interest of his organization, which is held together by patronage, large and small, extending downward into towns and boroughs, wherever his arm can reach. Members of legislatures may engage in hot debate over the business that is permitted to come before them. But they really initiate nothing of importance on their own motion. At the proper moment comes a crack of a whip and all talk ceases. The bill under consideration passes or the bill fails, as determined by the organization that has a majority in the legislature.

An omnipotent oligarchy, wearing perhaps the face of benevolence, may thus get into the saddle and popular government be reduced to a gesture. The young college man is not obtuse. He has a quick eye and sees exactly what the situation is. He is too independent to submerge his will in the will of a

party leader. If he has succeeded in getting into the legislature, one term is enough for him. Again he steps aside and finds his occupation elsewhere.

I have said that young people are by nature and education empiricists. It is well that this is so, for without experimentation there is no possibility of intelligent advance, and the life goes out of any enterprise. Now, we are all constantly repeating the phrase that the world is changing before our eyes. The generation that has been growing up since the war has seen tremendous changes take place in the map, in government, and in social and economic organization. Naturally it looks to find some of these changes reflected in the political language of the day.

Too often what it actually finds is a restatement of time-worn ideas in slightly altered phrasings. Every four years the tariff planks and the other stocks in trade of the political orator are brought out again with little attempt to adjust them to current facts. Real issues are obscured by ambiguous terms. Prohibition is, of course, one of the great social issues now before the country. It has been rightly described by President Hoover as an "experiment," and, if one may judge by the discussion and the polls on the subject in our colleges, the younger generation takes a keen interest in this experiment. Yet the campaign speaker naturally treats it in such a way that his friends among the dries can prove that he is dry, and the wets can claim him equally well for their own faction. How can we expect to awaken young people to activity in American politics while such a state of things persists?

If a natural tendency is blocked in one direction, it will turn in another. Denied or discouraged on the political and social side, the desire of American youth to experiment and reform has lately found an outlet in the arts. I am told that in centers such as Hull House, once devoted to social crusading, the crusading is now being done more in music or painting or literature. In Yale's iconoclastic journal, the best-written article so far published dealt with the subject of architecture. It is heartening to see new blood being injected into the arts. Yet our democracy cannot but feel seriously the loss to the public business of the best minds among its rising citizens. And on their side, these same minds are losing the chance of enrichment offered by participation in social and political causes.

I have remarked that youth is the time of strong loyalties. These tend to center around personalities even more than around causes. Yet this country has had since the days of Roosevelt and Wilson no preeminent political figures that appealed especially to the imagination of the young. To-day no party leader commands from them the esteem and admiration in which they hold, for example, Mr. Justice Holmes. American college students read with no little enthusiasm about the unbroken line in England of fine and able men who have gone from the great universities into high positions in the state, each generation training its successor in the art of government. But they do not see ahead of them any such line of men who have gone to Washington from their own campuses.

Lately we have not only had an unfortunate lack of men in the highest

public offices with the gift of arousing the respect and support of the young, but we have had worse than that. The record of the Harding administration with its pitiful slogan, "Back to Normalcy" after all the terrific sacrifice of the war, and the recent disclosures of abuses in such cities as New York and Chicago, have tended to shake all faith in the integrity and intelligence of public officers. These are unpleasant matters, but they cannot be avoided if we are to understand the political psychology of the Americans who are growing up with the present century. In the circumstances, there can be small wonder that most of them have preferred to look on at the spectacle of government from the side lines.

There was a time when it was otherwise. Once it was the ambition of young college graduates to bear a hand in building up the nation. They were given a fighting chance. Jefferson, a graduate of William and Mary's college, was elected to the Virginia House of Burgesses at the age of twenty-six. He was but thirty-three when he wrote the Declaration of Independence. Madison, a Princeton man, was only twenty-five when he was elected a delegate to the Revolutionary Convention of Virginia in 1776. In the next decade, he and Hamilton, a Columbia man six years his junior, were writing the Federalist Papers and laying the political and economic foundations of the new Republic. Washington, who at the age of twenty-three had been placed in command of the military forces at Virginia, made Jefferson his Secretary of State and Hamilton his Secretary of the Treasury, while Madison was reserved as an unofficial adviser, later to be elected President. Our government was then a young man's business.

Although I do not see any young Hamiltons or Jeffersons on the political horizon to-day, there are some hopeful signs. A number of gifted young college men, following the distinguished lead of Walter Lippmann, are exerting social and political pressure through editorial work in our dailies or weeklies. There is a sprinkling of them in our state legislatures and even in Congress. One of my colleagues among the state governors is just thirty-four. The organization known as the Crusaders has a good representation of men in their twenties and thirties among its members.

How can more of them be brought actively into our public life? This might happen at any moment in either of two ways. It might come about through the rise to political eminence in one of the great parties of some leader with the force of personality, mind, and speech that draws youth like a magnet. Failing the appearance of such a leader, it might still come about through the adoption by one of the parties of a bold, unequivocal, and progressive platform on the major issues of the day, and a serious effort by its organizers to recruit them into its ranks. If neither of these things happens within a reasonable time, we must be prepared for the possibility that intelligent young voters now aroused will cut loose from the old parties and form a new party, and make it one to be reckoned with, as has been the case with the Labor party in England.

There can be no doubt that among the more recent college graduates, who

are feeling it sharply, the present depression is acting as a spur upon interest in public affairs and their conduct. For the first time in many years, young people are beginning to recognize that national policies directly affect them. Lacking other jobs, they may now do well to go further and look around for any jobs in municipal or state offices that may be open to them. Badly paid as these usually are, they now contrast favorably with many business positions, and the experience to be had in them cannot but prove rewarding.

This brings up the classic objection to politics as a career in this country—that men or women of integrity without private means cannot afford to embark on it. For the majority, certainly, I can see no way around that objection from the purely financial point of view. The number of positions is small indeed, even including the foreign services, in which there is to-day any reasonable certainty of tenure or any reasonable chance of promotion. Still there are a few such positions. Those in the consular service especially have attractions for adventurous minds beyond the salary, and many others offer training for short periods in the handling of men and affairs that may be turned to valuable account in business.

Those who have jobs but because of the slow pace of business now have also an extra amount of leisure on their hands, and those who because of financial independence need not seek for paid positions at this crisis, I advise to give politics a trial as an avocation. Party organizations do not always prove to be as tight as they look when they are approached by resourceful persons. The thing to do is to crawl in through some loophole, and then, if you find that you are in the wrong crowd, crawl out again and find or form your own crowd. One is no longer born, as in Gilbert's day, either a little Liberal or a little Conservative. Once an educated man who knows how to deal with his fellow beings is inside the right fence, he may exert influence, and with skill, patience, and zeal may win his way to some position of leadership. In any case, active-minded, observant young people should find the experience worth while in itself as an opportunity to put to the test theories that they have studied inside college walls.

Usually a long road must be traversed by the young man who enters upon a political career before he can reach a conspicuous post in the national government. He may never arrive at the goal of his aspirations; but there is a field for him in local and state governments, where the problems, though much simpler, are equally economic. Consider, for instance, the question of taxation as it affects the welfare of a town or a municipality. In that one question is involved the organization of the local government, the prosperity of business from the manufacturer down to the small storekeeper, the maintenance and extension of roads and streets, adequate support of public libraries, public schools, and humane institutions, along with a multiplicity of other details necessary for the material and spiritual prosperity of a community. Nowhere else do the people receive so little for what they pay. With some notable exceptions, town and municipal governments are run primarily in the interest of the party in power. Offices are created to the fullest extent possible for politi-

cal heelers. When the citizens threaten to revolt, then an attempt is made to appease them by shifting the burden of taxation to the next generation through bond issues, which are mounting higher and higher every year. This process has been going on for a long time until now scores of municipalities in the United States are on the verge of bankruptcy. Some have already gone over the precipice. Here at his door the young college man has a rare chance to perform a service which his fellow citizens are not likely to forget. It is one that should challenge both his intellectual powers and his public spirit.

I believe that never before have American college graduates had so good a preliminary equipment for public office as they have to-day. I am aware that the newspapers, with lurid reports of their dissipations and cocktail parties in a land of prohibition and steady habits, sometimes give the impression that college students haven't the stamina for politics or anything else that means getting down to hardpan. It is, of course, true that there are too many wasters and drifters among them. Yet the great majority, as one who has long lived with them well knows, are really interested in a good deal of their work, including history and social science.

They have immense advantages to-day over former generations. Comparatively speaking, the college training of Hamilton and Jefferson was very meager. It consisted of hardly more than elementary mathematics and some Latin and Greek, with a smattering of ancient history. The great universities now provide, under the ablest scholars in the world, studies in political science, economics, sociology, government, and public law, and the political, social, and economic history of the United States and other countries. It is a wide sweep of knowledge, which embraces, beyond literature, the natural and physical sciences and the new psychology developed within the present century, all of which have important bearings upon the problems of government.

In my undergraduate days, college students as a rule were but little interested in public questions. We rarely discussed them. Not until my senior year at Yale, when William Graham Sumner spread before us the great issues in political and social science, did we come to know much about the complicated economic problems of the modern world. Then it was too late to specialize in them. Go now anywhere you please among groups of students and you will find them debating the financial crisis here and in Great Britain or Franco-German relations. They talk about war debts, reparations, and the Far Eastern situation. Some of them understand the political and economic ideas lying behind Italian Fascism, and most of them know the latest news from Russia. Partly through the exigencies of our national depression and partly through this interest in foreign affairs, in which it is clear that we are daily becoming more entangled, the attention of students and young graduates is being turned toward American political and economic questions. The next step should be to translate intention into action. This is the moment to make the experiment—with the most exciting election since the war nearly with us.

Such a deadlock as now exists between the older and the younger generations in the field of politics always looks hopeless until some able man or able

group rises to break it. The present situation is in the nature of a direct challenge to the older generation. If the seasoned leaders are wise, they will take account of the political and social awakening which the current crisis is producing among the young, and they will turn it to constructive use by speedily placing before them candidates and issues that will rouse them further from lethargy.

The present situation is a still stronger challenge to robust American youth. I should emphasize the word *robust*, for the political scene is no place for the anæmic dilettante, who is unwilling and unable to learn how to meet hard blows and stubborn opposition. But the opportunity is already in the hands of our muscular young citizens to take the initiative, to make up their minds what our democracy needs, and to use all their educational equipment and organizing powers to get it. From my brief experience in state government, I have learned one thing that our democracy needs to-day above all others. It is the energy of intelligent, aggressive, and well-trained young men and women in practical efforts for the public welfare. For their own full and vigorous development as much as for that of the country, I have no hesitation in saying to those who can stand a cold plunge: Come on in—the water's fine!

MARRIAGE AND CHILDREN¹

by Bertrand Russell

THE result of this state of things is a widespread but very flimsy hypocrisy, which allows many infractions of the code, and forbids only those which must become public. A man may not live openly with a woman who is not his wife, an unmarried woman may not have a child, and neither man nor woman may get into the divorce court. Subject to these restrictions, there is in practice very great freedom. It is this practical freedom which makes the state of the law seem tolerable to those who do not accept the principles upon which it is based. What has to be sacrificed to propitiate the holders of strict views is not pleasure, but only children and a common life and truth and honesty. It cannot be supposed that this is the result desired by those who maintain the code, but equally it cannot be denied that this is the result which they do in fact achieve. Extra-matrimonial relations which do not lead to children and are accompanied by a certain amount of deceit remain unpunished, but severe penalties fall on those which are honest or lead to children.

Within marriage, the expense of children leads to continually greater limitation of families. The limitation is greatest among those who have most sense of parental responsibility and most wish to educate their children well,

¹ From B. Russell, *Why Men Fight*. By permission of D. Appleton-Century Co.

since it is to them that the expense of children is most severe. But although the economic motive for limiting families has hitherto probably been the strongest, it is being continually reinforced by another. Women are acquiring freedom—not merely outward and formal freedom, but inward freedom, enabling them to think and feel genuinely, not according to received maxims. To the men who have prated confidently of women's natural instincts, the result would be surprising if they were aware of it. Very large numbers of women, when they are sufficiently free to think for themselves, do not desire to have children, or at most desire one child in order not to miss the experience which a child brings. There are women who are intelligent and active-minded who resent the slavery to the body which is involved in having children. There are ambitious women, who desire a career which leaves no time for children. There are women who love the admiration of men; such women will at least postpone child-bearing until their youth is past. All these classes of women are rapidly becoming more numerous, and it may be safely assumed that their numbers will continue to increase for many years to come.

It is too soon to judge with any confidence as to the effects of women's freedom upon private life and upon the life of the nation. But I think it is not too soon to see that it will be profoundly different from the effect expected by the pioneers of the women's movement. Men have invented, and women in the past have often accepted, a theory that women are the guardians of the race, that their life centers in motherhood, that all their instincts and desires are directed, consciously or unconsciously, to this end. Tolstoy's *Natacha* illustrates this theory: she is charming, gay, liable to passion, until she is married; then she becomes merely a virtuous mother, without any mental life. This result has Tolstoy's entire approval. It must be admitted that it is very desirable from the point of view of the nation, whatever we may think of it in relation to private life. It must also be admitted that it is probably common among women who are physically vigorous and not highly civilized. But in countries like France and England it is becoming increasingly rare. More and more women find motherhood unsatisfying, not what their needs demand. And more and more there comes to be a conflict between their personal development and the future of the community. It is difficult to know what ought to be done to mitigate this conflict, but I think it is worth while to see what are likely to be its effects if it is not mitigated.

Owing to the combination of economic prudence with the increasing freedom of women, there is at present a selective birth-rate of a very singular kind. In France the population is practically stationary, and in England it is rapidly becoming so; this means that some sections are dwindling while others are increasing. The sections that are dwindling include the whole middle-class and the skilled artisans. The sections that are increasing are the very poor, the shiftless and drunken, the feeble-minded—feeble-minded women, especially, are apt to be very prolific. There is an increase in those sections of the population which still actively believe the Catholic religion,

such as the Irish and the Bretons, because the Catholic religion forbids limitation of families. Within the classes that are dwindling, it is the best elements that are dwindling most rapidly. Working-class boys of exceptional ability rise, by means of scholarships, into the professional class; they naturally desire to marry into the class to which they belong by education, not into the class from which they spring; but as they have no money beyond what they earn, they cannot marry young, or afford a large family. The result is that in each generation the best elements are extracted from the working classes and artificially sterilized, at least in comparison with those who are left. In the professional classes the young women who have initiative, energy, or intelligence are as a rule not inclined to marry young, or to have more than one or two children when they do marry. Marriage has been in the past the only obvious means of livelihood for women; pressure from parents and fear of becoming an old maid combined to force many women to marry in spite of a complete absence of inclination for the duties of a wife. But now a young woman of ordinary intelligence can easily earn her own living, and can acquire freedom and experience without the permanent ties of a husband and a family of children. The result is that if she marries she marries late.

For these reasons, if an average sample of children were taken out of the population of England, and their parents were examined, it would be found that prudence, energy, intellect, and enlightenment were less common among parents than in the population in general; while shiftlessness, feeble-mindedness, stupidity, and superstition were more common than in the population in general. It would be found that those who are prudent or energetic or intelligent or enlightened actually fail to reproduce their own numbers; that is to say, they do not on the average have as many as two children each who survive infancy. On the other hand, those who have the opposite qualities have, on the average, more than two children each, and more than reproduce their own numbers.

It is impossible to estimate the effect which this will have upon the character of the population without a much greater knowledge of heredity than exists at present. But so long as children continue to live with their parents, parental example and early education must have a great influence in developing their character, even if we leave heredity entirely out of account. Whatever may be thought of genius, there can be no doubt that intelligence, whether through heredity or through education, tends to run in families, and that the decay of the families in which it is common must lower the mental standard of the population. It seems unquestionable that if our economic system and our moral standards remain unchanged, there will be, in the next two or three generations, a rapid change for the worse in the character of the population in all civilized countries, and an actual diminution of numbers in the most civilized.

The diminution of numbers, in all likelihood, will rectify itself in time through the elimination of those characteristics which at present lead to a small birth-rate. Men and women who can still believe the Catholic faith

will have a biological advantage; gradually a race will grow up which will be impervious to all the assaults of reason, and will believe imperturbably that limitation of families leads to hell-fire. Women who have mental interests, who care about art or literature or politics, who desire a career or who value their liberty, will gradually grow rarer, and be more and more replaced by a placid maternal type which has no interests outside the home and no dislike of the burden of motherhood. This result, which ages of masculine domination have vainly striven to achieve, is likely to be the final outcome of women's emancipation and of their attempt to enter upon a wider sphere than that to which the jealousy of men confined them in the past.

Perhaps, if the facts could be ascertained, it would be found that something of the same kind occurred in the Roman Empire. The decay of energy and intelligence during the second, third, and fourth centuries of our era has always remained more or less mysterious. But there is reason to think that then, as now, the best elements of the population in each generation failed to reproduce themselves, and that the least vigorous were, as a rule, those to whom the continuance of the race was due. One might be tempted to suppose that civilization, when it has reached a certain height, becomes unstable, and tends to decay through some inherent weakness, some failure to adapt the life of instinct to the intense mental life of a period of high culture. But such vague theories have always something glib and superstitious which makes them worthless as scientific explanations or as guides to action. It is not by a literary formula, but by detailed and complex thought, that a true solution is to be found.

Let us first be clear as to what we desire. There is no importance in an increasing population; on the contrary, if the population of Europe were stationary, it would be much easier to promote economic reform and to avoid war. What is regrettable *at present* is not the decline of the birth-rate in itself, but the fact that the decline is greatest in the best elements of the population. There is reason, however, to fear in the future three bad results: first, an absolute decline in the numbers of English, French, and Germans; secondly, as a consequence of this decline, their subjugation by less civilized races and the extinction of their tradition; thirdly, a revival of their numbers on a much lower plane of civilization, after generations of selection of those who have neither intelligence nor foresight. If this result is to be avoided, the present unfortunate selectiveness of the birth-rate must be somehow stopped.

The problem is one which applies to the whole of Western civilization. There is no difficulty in discovering a theoretical solution, but there is great difficulty in persuading men to adopt a solution in practice, because the effects to be feared are not immediate and the subject is one upon which people are not in the habit of using their reason. If a rational solution is ever adopted, the cause will probably be international rivalry. It is obvious that if one State—say Germany—adopted a rational means of dealing with the matter, it would acquire an enormous advantage over other States unless they did likewise. After the war, it is possible that population questions will attract

more attention than they did before, and it is likely that they will be studied from the point of view of international rivalry. This motive, unlike reason and humanity, is perhaps strong enough to overcome men's objections to a scientific treatment of the birth-rate.

In the past, at most periods and in most societies, the instincts of men and women led of themselves to a more than sufficient birth-rate; Malthus's statement of the population question had been true enough up to the time when he wrote. It is still true of barbarous and semi-civilized races. But it has become false as regards the more civilized half of the population in Western Europe and America. Among them, instinct no longer suffices to keep numbers even stationary.

We may sum up the reasons for this in order of importance, as follows:

1. The expense of children is very great if parents are conscientious.
2. An increasing number of women desire to have no children, or only one or two, in order not to be hampered in their own careers.
3. Owing to the excess of women, a large number of women remain unmarried. These women, though not debarred in practice from relations with men, are debarred by the code from having children. In this class are to be found an enormous and increasing number of women who earn their own living as typists, in shops, or otherwise. The war has opened many employments to women from which they were formerly excluded, and this change is probably only in part temporary.

If the sterilizing of the best parts of the population is to be arrested, the first and most pressing necessity is the removal of the economic motives for limiting families. The expense of children ought to be borne wholly by the community. Their food and clothing and education ought to be provided, not only to the very poor as a matter of charity, but to all classes as a matter of public interest. In addition to this, a woman who is capable of earning money, and who abandons wage-earning for motherhood, ought to receive from the State as nearly as possible what she would have received if she had not had children. The only condition attached to State maintenance of the mother and the children should be that both parents are physically and mentally sound in all ways likely to affect the children. Those who are not sound should not be debarred from having children, but should continue, as at present, to bear the expense of the children themselves.

So far we have been considering the question of the reproduction of the race, rather than the effect of sex relations in fostering or hindering the development of men and women. From the point of view of the race, what seems needed is a complete removal of the economic burdens due to children from all parents who are not physically or mentally unfit, and as much freedom in the law as is compatible with public knowledge of paternity. Exactly the same changes seem called for when the question is considered from the point of view of the men and women concerned.

In regard to marriage, as with all the other traditional bonds between human beings, a very extraordinary change is taking place, wholly inevitable,

wholly necessary as a stage in the development of a new life, but by no means wholly satisfactory until it is completed. All the traditional bonds were based on *authority*—of the king, the feudal baron, the priest, the father, the husband. All these bonds, just because they were based on authority, are dissolving or already dissolved, and the creation of other bonds to take their place is as yet very incomplete. For this reason human relations have at present an unusual triviality, and do less than they did formerly to break down the hard walls of the Ego.

The ideal of marriage in the past depended upon the authority of the husband, which was admitted as a right by the wife. The husband was free, the wife was a willing slave. In all matters which concerned husband and wife jointly, it was taken for granted that the husband's fiat should be final. The wife was expected to be faithful, while the husband, except in very religious societies, was only expected to throw a decent veil over his infidelities. Families could not be limited except by continence, and a wife had no recognized right to demand continence, however she might suffer from frequent children.

So long as the husband's right to authority was unquestionably believed by both men and women, this system was fairly satisfactory, and afforded to both a certain instinctive fulfilment which is rarely achieved among educated people now. Only one will, the husband's, had to be taken into account, and there was no need of the difficult adjustments required when common decisions have to be reached by two equal wills. The wife's desires were not treated seriously enough to enable them to thwart the husband's needs, and the wife herself, unless she was exceptionally selfish, did not seek self-development, or see in marriage anything but an opportunity for duties. Since she did not seek or expect much happiness, she suffered less, when happiness was not attained, than a woman does now: her suffering contained no element of indignation or surprise, and did not readily turn into bitterness and sense of injury.

The saintly, self-sacrificing woman whom our ancestors praised had her place in a certain organic conception of society, the conception of the ordered hierarchy of authorities which dominated the Middle Ages. She belongs to the same order of ideas as the faithful servant, the loyal subject, and the orthodox son of the Church. This whole order of ideas has vanished from the civilized world, and it is to be hoped that it has vanished for ever, in spite of the fact that the society which it produced was vital and in some ways full of nobility. The old order has been destroyed by the new ideals of justice and liberty, beginning with religion, passing on to politics, and reaching at last the private relations of marriage and the family. When once the question has been asked, "Why should a woman submit to a man?" when once the answers derived from tradition and the Bible have ceased to satisfy, there is no longer any possibility of maintaining the old subordination. To every man who has the power of thinking impersonally and freely, it is obvious, as soon as the question is asked, that the rights of women are precisely the same as the

rights of men. Whatever dangers and difficulties, whatever temporary chaos, may be incurred in the transition to equality, the claims of reason are so insistent and so clear that no opposition to them can hope to be long successful.

Mutual liberty, which is now demanded, is making the old form of marriage impossible. But a new form, which shall be an equally good vehicle for instinct, and an equal help to spiritual growth, has not yet been developed. For the present, women who are conscious of liberty as something to be preserved are also conscious of the difficulty of preserving it. The wish for mastery is an ingredient in most men's sexual passions, especially in those which are strong and serious. It survives in many men whose theories are entirely opposed to despotism. The result is a fight for liberty on the one side and for life on the other. Women feel that they must protect their individuality; men feel, often very dumbly, that the repression of instinct which is demanded of them is incompatible with vigor and initiative. The clash of these opposing moods makes all real mingling of personalities impossible; the man and woman remain hard, separate units, continually asking themselves whether anything of value to themselves is resulting from the union. The effect is that relations tend to become trivial and temporary, a pleasure rather than the satisfaction of a profound need, an excitement, not an attainment. The fundamental loneliness into which we are born remains untouched, and the hunger for inner companionship remains unappeased.

No cheap and easy solution of this trouble is possible. It is a trouble which affects most the most civilized men and women, and is an outcome of the increasing sense of individuality which springs inevitably from mental progress. I doubt if there is any radical cure except in some form of religion, so firmly and sincerely believed as to dominate even the life of instinct. The individual is not the end and aim of his own being: outside the individual, there is the community, the future of mankind, the immensity of the universe in which all our hopes and fears are a mere pin-point. A man and woman with reverence for the spirit of life in each other, with an equal sense of their own unimportance beside the whole life of man, may become comrades without interference with liberty, and may achieve the union of instinct without doing violence to the life of mind and spirit. As religion dominated the old form of marriage, so religion must dominate the new. But it must be a new religion, based upon liberty, justice, and love, not upon authority and law and hell-fire.

A bad effect upon the relations of men and women has been produced by the romantic movement, through directing attention to what ought to be an incidental good, not the purpose for which relations exist. Love is what gives intrinsic value to a marriage, and, like art and thought, it is one of the supreme things which make human life worth preserving. But though there is no good marriage without love, the best marriages have a purpose which goes beyond love. The love of two people for each other is too circumscribed, too separate from the community, to be by itself the main purpose of a good life. It is not in itself a sufficient source of activities, it is not sufficiently

prospective, to make an existence in which ultimate satisfaction can be found. It brings its great moments, and then its times which are less great, which are unsatisfying because they are less great. It becomes, sooner or later, retrospective, a tomb of dead joys, not a well-spring of new life. This evil is inseparable from any purpose which is to be achieved in a single supreme emotion. The only adequate purposes are those which stretch out into the future, which can never be fully achieved, but are always growing, and infinite with the infinity of human endeavor. And it is only when love is linked to some infinite purpose of this kind that it can have the seriousness and depth of which it is capable.

For the great majority of men and women seriousness in sex relations is most likely to be achieved through children. Children are to most people rather a need than a desire: instinct is as a rule only consciously directed towards what used to lead to children. The desire for children is apt to develop, in middle life, when the adventure of one's own existence is past, when the friendships of youth seem less important than they once did, when the prospect of a lonely old age begins to terrify, and the feeling of having no share in the future becomes oppressive. Then those who, while they were young, have had no sense that children would be a fulfillment of their needs, begin to regret their former contempt for the normal, and to envy acquaintances whom before they had thought humdrum. But owing to economic causes it is often impossible for the young, and especially for the best of the young, to have children without sacrificing things of vital importance to their own lives. And so youth passes, and the need is felt too late.

Needs without corresponding desires have grown increasingly common as life has grown more different from that primitive existence from which our instincts are derived, and to which, rather than to that of the present day, they are still very largely adapted. An unsatisfied need produces, in the end, as much pain and as much distortion of character as if it had been associated with a conscious desire. For this reason, as well as for the sake of the race, it is important to remove the present economic inducements to childlessness. There is no necessity whatever to urge parenthood upon those who feel disinclined to it, but there is necessity not to place obstacles in the way of those who have no such disinclination.

RICHARD KANE CONSIDERS MORALS¹

by Irwin Edman

I SUPPOSE I should have been surprised to find Richard and his friends on a Sunday evening engaged in a rather more than tepid discussion of morals. I know Richard pretty well by this time, and if there is any word that has depressing associations for him, it is the epithet 'moral.' I tried my best once, while he was an undergraduate, to make him take my course in ethics. I told him, among other things, that it would do him good and that it would help him to do others good. I could not have used less effective propaganda.

Richard has known people with a passion for ethics. A high-school chum of his who had won the character medal at commencement had become the leader of an evening group connected with the Moral Improvement Society. To this good young man all questions were moral questions, and the world was all intensity and unction. He was forever attending conferences of young people held with a view to bettering the world. Nobody ever joked in his presence, or only within very proper limits. This youth made a point of being kind to human beings, as some human beings make a point of being kind to animals. After ten minutes with this practicing saint, Richard used to think of himself as an abandoned rake, and decide henceforth to seek his society chiefly among his own low kind. How few people combined a passion for moral improvement with a cheery or charming personality! Richard had long since made for himself an eternal distinction between the good people and the gay.

I have my own good reasons for suspecting that, in his private mind, much like Molière's 'Le bourgeois gentilhomme,' Richard had been talking and thinking morals much of his life without knowing it. At thirteen, the age of vanishing innocence, he had first felt the distinction, fixed very deeply for him even into later years, between the naughty and the nice world. That sinister and beckoning realm, talked about in undertones by the boys of his neighborhood and discussed later with a curious and disconcerting sense of solemnity by his instructor in hygiene, had first distinctively marked for him the terrains of good and evil. It had taken him a long time to get over the ineluctable feeling that a cigarette was the smoking symbol of evil. All through his adolescence he had associated cigarette-smokers with those children of wrath he had seen in the persons of hoarse, smirking, and sallow-faced young toughs gathered near street-corner saloons.

In grammar school he had copied many times, in a childish hand he never

¹ From I. Edman, *Richard Kane Looks at Life* By arrangement with and permission of Houghton Mifflin Co.

outgrew, the maxim, 'Honesty is the best policy.' It was not until a classmate had passed a trigonometry examination by pursuing a different line that the matter came into question for him. There had been at college those long talk sessions at the fraternity house when, along with God and religion, sex had been much discussed. In how many ways, with what adolescent dialectic, these perplexed youngsters had tried to bridge the chasm between the good and the seductive!

There was one period when, after a course in labor problems, the rightness and justice of things in the present social order had come to be for him a personal and stinging question. For a very little while he had burned with a quiet fire to set the world aright, and had stormed against the complacencies of his classmates and his suburban home. He had eloquently converted four of his friends from indulging in strike-breaking as a lark.

I think Richard, left to himself, might have been a very eager little moralist. But it was not in the *mores* of his advanced group to be moralistic. Many of these young people had been a good part of the way through hell during the war, and they were in no mood now for pretty or noble moral maxims. They were all being fed on the bitter realism of after-the-war novels and plays, and those who were themselves writers were busy getting the native poison of the war out of their systems. If they had any morale, it was that of ironic detachment; if they had any worship, it was that of freedom, or of such beauty as they could find or create in a hopelessly disordered world.

A memory of some of this passed through my mind as I put my overcoat and hat down in the hallway outside Richard's living-room that Sunday evening. I heard something about morals; it was Richard's voice. 'Ah,' I thought, 'Richard on moral improvement; a new rôle.'

I had made it a habit to drop in on Richard Sunday evenings, and I was prepared for any subject. There was sure to be Helen's delightful and simple welcome; her excellent salad, sandwiches, and coffee. The conversation was always provocative, if not brilliant, and it moved, if somewhat muddily, in the realm of ideas; it was, if not always profound, always spirited, and sincere, if not lucid.

I had developed the habit of sitting in a corner and saying as little as possible. That was not hard, as in Richard's circle a professor was supposed to be better seen than heard. Richard's guests always acted toward me with that condescending graciousness which the young always adopt toward those they regard as definitely on the shelf. The subjects ranged widely, but one always came away from Richard's with a sense that the conversation touched one main theme. These young people were almost academic in the way they would do a subject once they opened it. It was only two weeks before that they had gone at it rather furiously on the question of the futility of thought, on which I was appealed to as an expert. With my usual rustic habits, I left about eleven, but I heard from Richard the next day that the conversation had flourished till one, with the affirmative winning.

Richard and his wife have a pretty home, with a big living-room, at the top

of a converted brownstone house. There is Helen's small grand piano magnificently in a corner of the room as one enters. There are some splendid Dutch etchings that Richard's family, with, on his part, unexpected good taste, had given him. Most striking of all, however, is a fairly thrilling portrait of a soul that a mystic painter friend of Richard's had done for him. It is a picture of two shadowy athletic figures, half locked in an embrace, half grappling with each other, the faces in a terrible red agony. It is, Richard explained to me, the portrait of a divided soul. Helen said it did not belong in a home, but in a psychopathic clinic. Richard answered briefly that it was his coat of arms.

On this particular Sunday evening, as I entered, Richard was standing by the piano.

'Who is there over sixteen,' he was asking, 'who doesn't know that morals are simply current conventions?' A sophisticated man is beyond these provincial distinctions of good and evil, isn't he? Isn't he, Professor?' he shouted gayly, waving his hand toward me.

Richard was in high fettle. When there is a crowd around, he can easily fall into the discursive mood. Very often during these Sunday evenings he will keep quiet, unostentatiously pushing the conversation ahead now and then, or listening with his fine, fair head bent a little forward, as if he were getting at the moment the final granting of a dear wish that he had long cherished. When the subject touches his imagination, he will argue a speculative point as if his life depended on it, or his job. He will pace up and down, lose his gracious host-like manner, clap his hands to emphasize a point, and beat down interruptions. To-night he had an unusually stimulating group.

Standing by the low bookshelves that ran along the wall was a gray-haired man of fifty whom I had several times met at Richard's house. His face was strong, and his eyes were genial. He was a retired banker who had written a satirical novel about business, who was getting a picturesque worldly experience out of his system on to paper, and who had a childlike gusto for almost any subject within human comprehension. By thirty years in business the edge of his intellectual appetite seemed only to have been quickened. At the present moment his two favorite themes were mysticism and revolution. His name was William Weldon, but he was known as 'the Major,' principally because he had once gone to a military academy.

Sitting near Helen, by the piano, was James Morrison, a young man who was assistant book editor on one of the big papers. This round-faced youth had a notorious collection of the most learnedly erotic literature; he had developed, besides, a passionate devotion to negro sculpture, and to a study of all the myths and traditions that had ever been current concerning immortality. He was a likable youngster, and led, for so learned a being, a simple enough life. He went almost nowhere except to Richard Kane's, and it was a joke among his friends that he never stayed up later than eleven. There was one professional psycho-analyst there, Bronson, a swarthy, bald-headed gentleman, with a slight lisp. It was difficult ever to get him to talk about his specialty. His one central passion in life was Greek vases, and I have never

seen a face light with more ingenuous glee than did his when he spoke of the white figure vases of the classic period. On a steamer coming home from Europe, Richard had been dragged by him into his cabin to see the marvelous new reproductions he had got to the vases in the Kunst-Historisches Museum at Vienna.

My eye wandered over the others. There was Tommy Keenan, of Richard's own class at college; he had been a football player. I don't know what brought Tommy and Richard together except that they had taken a course in Dante together. And Tommy was as gentle a heart as ever graced a football team. There was about him something of the *cuore gentile* made so much of by that Dante whose poem Tommy used to carry around in a pocket edition. Richard liked Tommy, I think, for a certain wistful piety he had; there were few people from whom he had got so vivid a sense of the reality of religion as an experience. To go to high mass with Tommy was thrilling, and Tommy's face was part of the thrill. There was about him, too, an engaging Irish intonation that Richard, always sensitive to voices, especially loved. What they talked about I could never guess, and I wondered what on earth Tommy could be doing in this atmosphere of high intellectual gospel. Tommy's brows would pucker at what he called the 'fifty-cent words,' and occasionally his bewildered eyes would meet Helen's and be comforted by her amused look. Once, when it was altogether beyond him, he asked Helen, for the saving of his soul, to play.

There was, as usual, Edward Fervint, a Dionysiac young Californian, connected in some way with the Little Theater Movement, who spoke of the future of the drama as another Californian might talk of his climate. There was Grace Spellman, a fragile, middle-aged lady, with gray in her hair, and something like injured and anxious tenderness in her eyes. She had a sweet, youthful passion for oppressed races and all hurt minorities, and she was very beautiful to listen to in her soft, cool voice.

The inventory of my eye ceased, and I found myself listening to Richard. 'Morals,' Richard was saying with unwonted heat, 'are wickedness. With all the talk and smoke, the ends of life are very simple, and every one knows what they are. We've been debauched by the moralists, I tell you. Simple human happiness, the natural pleasures of the natural man; the rest is rubbish.'

'The boy's going good,' Tommy whispered to Helen in awed admiration. Richard has a mysterious gift in Tommy's eyes for 'philosophy and all that sort of stuff.'

'Simple human happiness, Richard?' It was Grace Spellman of the soft, cool voice. 'And perhaps you could tell us what that is. It will be nice of you, my child, to tell us what it seems to me a number of people have been vainly trying to tell us for the last five thousand years.'

'Of course I can, Grace. Happiness is simply the living out of the possibilities in each of us. Morals have been chiefly engaged in suppressing them. For thousands of years now moralists have been cutting out part of our possible happiness by laying down injunctions about what not to do. The

"thou shalt not" have ruled the world. It's about time the "ayes" had a chance. All I'm saying is that if they'd let us alone, to live out our lives each in his own way, we'd work out our happiness quickly enough.'

'I'll say we would,' Tommy whispered to no one in particular.

'I've been trying,' Richard continued, 'to do that ever since I got into long trousers. It's taken me a while to slough off all the repressions, compulsions, inhibitions, and what not on which I've been brought up. It takes you twenty-five years to clear the path to happiness, and then you're free to find it, right on the doorstep of your own soul.'

'My dear boy'—it was Mrs. Spellman again—'is it as simple as that? If you and Helen were living in your own private circle in paradise, you'd not have to worry much about moral questions. And you probably would, too. You would always be wanting some quiet corner in your circle where you could meditate in peace. And there would be times you would wish that Helen *would* stop playing the piano, however beautifully she played it.'

Richard winced. He had found that there were certain drawbacks to having a wife who was a musician. 'No, Richard,' said Mrs. Spellman, 'just at the present moment you are fairly happy, and if you could stay so always, and every one else could, you'd probably never fret much about morals again. But the problems remain whether you blink them or not.'

'Oh, don't mistake me!' Richard interrupted. 'I'm simply off the old moral principles sort of thing, and the traditional, solemn gabble about it. I guess I'm a little drunk with the freedom of our generation. We've got rid of the old foolish pieties and prohibitions, and we've cleared the ground for some sensible code of life, some program by which we can decently, and more or less beautifully, live.'

'Decently and beautifully live!' mused Weldon the retired banker. 'Decently and beautifully live! Not badly put, young man; maybe you can lay out the program for us, stage setting and all.'

'Well, I think I could, if you'd give me a little time. I'd begin with sex first. It seems to me we're just about ready to do something with all our emancipation and frankness on that subject besides sneer at the Victorians and parade all our knowledge of the peculiarities of sexual behavior among psychopathic cases in Viennese clinics.'

For the last six months Richard had been 'off' psycho-analysis. He had heard so much about complexes and inhibitions, transferences and neuroses, that he had almost thought never to hear sex spoken of directly and intelligibly again.

Bronson, the psycho-analyst, broke in in his quiet, slightly weary voice. He spoke in the tone of one who for the hundredth time was explaining what ought, to any normal intelligence, to be absurdly clear.

'Dick, you still talk as if the new psychology of sex were something that belonged in a clinic or a hospital. It is merely a description of the behavior of perfectly ordinary human beings. For the first time in history we are ceasing to think of human personality in gross. We are actually tracing some

of the specific conflicts and torments. We are finding specific ways of making some order out of the chaos that lies below the level of consciousness in the soul of each of us. We are progressing as far beyond the older psychology as a geologist is beyond a childish description of a rock formation. If we're ever going to have straight thinking about human behavior, we've got to probe below that polite and official personality which each of us parades to the world. Because we've pierced below that surface, stinging our prides and vanities and hypocrisies a little in the process and turning up a little mud at the bottom, you want to throw us out altogether. But if we are showing the devils in the deeps of each of us, we are showing how we may get rid of those devils, too. Twenty years from now you may realize that we have been doing for the soul of man what Copernicus did for the solar system—describing its true movements and authentic relations for the first time. Of course we've been working on clinical cases where the facts are writ large; but out of these sad, cancered cases of the soul we may be able to do a lot for you apparently normal people yet.'

'Good here,' Richard said. 'All I am suggesting is that we've got to do more than accept the new facts about sex and the subconscious. We've got to find out what our ideals and hopes are about the most intimate of all personal relations, and start making some decent program for ourselves. So far so good. I string along with all the emancipates on all that. But nobody has found a program yet. Lord! sometimes I feel as if my maiden aunt, with her tight, little Victorian chart of things, had at least a clearer map to go by than we have. We have nothing—nothing but disillusion. We make a sport of it, but I think we'll have to go on from there, and I've been trying to find people to tell us where we go from here. It feels so unsafe, so anchorless, so meaningless! Ever since I got out of college, I have felt as if I've been adrift. There's no one to show us a way home. I sometimes wish I'd been born fifty years ago. Our grandfathers may have been wrong, but they didn't flutter about in the dark; we do. It makes me uneasy, the way I felt once when I was a child, and saw my mother cry for the first time. So adults, too, had times when they apparently didn't know what to do! When I was in college, I thought the professors knew what to do. But they don't know any better than we do. I know they don't; the professor here has admitted it.'

The Major was chuckling to himself.

'Well, well, well,' he said in his hearty voice, 'well, well, well, doesn't know what to do! My boy, you're an old man before your time; you've lost your sense of adventure. Lost your sense of adventure, you have. That's what makes your generation, and mine, if I may still be allowed in it, so delightful. Nobody knows where he's going; it's all exciting and helter-skelter, like to-bogganning, or those crazy things they have at Coney where you get bounced from side to side and don't know where you are going to bring up. You're too serious, Dick; you've got to be old like me, Dick, in order to take these things with a proper sense of perspective, which means a sense of humor. I know what's wrong with you; you still have the impression that the world

ought to be reasonable and intelligent. You're wrong, my boy. Intelligence is an occasional oasis in the world; it doesn't irrigate all of it. Learn to take it all as a grand phantasmagoria, can't you? A vaudeville show, a farce, a Mardi Gras. Be satisfied with whatever quaintness or gleam or merriment you find there. Too solemn, young fellow, too solemn.'

'Well, you may take it all as a huge and delightful comedy, Major,' protested Richard, 'but we young fellows can't quite. After all, it's our world, and we've got to live in it for half a century yet, maybe, and it gets a little sickening having to live in a world without any meaning or stability or sense to it. We're off the old ideas, and we haven't got any new ones.'

'Take sex. We're all very smart about the biology of sex, and I've heard every one of my acquaintance quote Aldous Huxley's lines about it: "And so we sit in blissful calm quietly sweating palm to palm." But, confound it! that doesn't explain the whole business—this irony and realism and information and biology. I want something that will make a place for the rapture and exaltation and heights of life, as well as for the mud and slime at its bottom. I'm a little sick of this intellectual superman business'

'Dickie, boy, you're a sentimentalist,' broke in Morrison, the book reviewer. 'You've had your taste of young truth, and insight, and a good frank free look at life, and you can't quite stand the gaff. You're looking for some sentimental shelter. Soon you'll be reading the "Idylls of the King" and Samuel Smiles's "Maxims," dress up like Sir Galahad, and be memorizing the Ten Commandments for future reference.'

'Not by a long shot, James,' answered Richard, 'but you ironists take almost as much joy out of life as the puritans do. The puritans told me sex was bad because it was fleshly. You tell me love is absurd because it is sex. One robs you of sex, which is the poetry of life; the other robs you of love, the poetry of sex. I don't see that there's much to choose between them. I'm perfectly frank to say I am hungering for some of the old certainties—for some rock or anchorage. And it's difficult to know where to look for it. I want to read about God, and they tell me about the theory of luck among the early Fijis. I want a way of life, and they tell me about ostracism among the Cratolophoboi. It almost drives one to join the Moral Improvement Society.'

'That's your damned intellectualism, Dick. You've been debauched by books and lectures and things. You move too exclusively among intellectuals.' It was Edward Fervint, the Californian. 'You want life to be patterned, to have a meaning, to be as logical as a syllogism, or as systematic as a table of logarithms. Life is more beautiful than theory, and more important; and vitality interests me more than reason. The beauty, glory, and wonder of it, the rush of its very chaos, the pressure of its confusions. This interests me more than any golden anaemia you might get out of a serene and ordered way of life. Apollo and Dionysus were both myths, but I think Apollo was the more absurd myth of the two. I am weary of all this dull apathy of intellectualism. Give me fifty minutes of rapture rather than a cycle of intelligent control. A way of life is usually a way of death. If the great

geniuses had followed your search, old fellow, they never would have created a living line. The wine of life seems to have gone out of your veins since prohibition. Down with Apollo and up with Dionysus! Your ideal of life is a faded calm, a peace with all the juice of life crushed out of it. You want all your doubts settled, your turbulence set at rest, your life frozen into a death. Well, here's to you, if what you want is to live in a mausoleum. I string along with the Major here. I'm content to have a little confusion in life as long as it's life; there never yet was wine without fermentation. When yet this life program of yours is started, it will be the program of a funeral. Everything will be fixed and ordered for eternity the way it is in a tomb. It will be as beautiful as a Greek marble and as dead. It will be an eternal pose, not a life. Give me a drink.'

'That's old stuff, that doctrine of rapture, Edward,' Dick retorted. 'And if one could make of life a string of pearls of rapture, I should be content to abandon my search for some ultimate way or pattern of life. But these moments of rapture you get in the theater, for example, are, as you constantly insist in your articles in the "Dramatic Arts Monthly," a matter of the most refined and disciplined art. It seems to me that life is no easier an art than the theater, and I should think, we might find it no less interesting. I don't see why ultimately we should not dream of making life as beautiful in its entirety as it is at moments in love, friendship, in art, in the theater. Why not? But if rapture means going off the handle as much as possible, I don't see how life can be anything more than a mess and a morning after. A bacchanal may be the climax of experience, but it is hardly a technic for civilization.'

'If you had made less obeisance to the fine arts and philosophy and all that sort of thing, my boy,' the Major boomed, 'and paid a little pedestrian attention to the forces that are really moving the world, you'd not talk so glibly about laying down a program for civilization.'

'All this talk has as much to do with the things that determine our ways of life "as the whistle of a locomotive has to do with the movement of the train." Our moral standards are changing because our economic conditions are changing. We've changed our ideas about sex because the conditions of women have changed. You can't be quite as brutal or as sentimental about women once they become part of the daily office routine; nor can women be as silly or as sentimental about themselves. We've changed our ideas of government because industry and education have changed. Don't fret too much about changing the world. *Ça change toujours*, and fifty years later the ideas catch up with it.'

'But I'll tell you why you're crying, son. You've got, if the psycho-analysts will pardon me for adding another term to their already overloaded vocabulary, a mother complex, spiritually. You are in the open spaces of a free mind, and the silence, or perhaps, I might say, the emptiness of it frightens you. There's nothing you can cling to in the clamor; there's nothing that guarantees your future. You look into the chasms of nature and your own soul,

and you shudder. Why should you? Suppose love is lust at its basis; I wonder why that should discourage you. Suppose God is simply a pathetic human attempt to imagine a perfection that never was on land or sea. They are, neither of them, less interesting or less beautiful for that reason.

'But the real trouble is deeper than that. You've accepted this whole materialistic universe as final. You've swallowed whole the noisy little dogmatisms of the current age. You accept all the new authorities. You might do better if you went back to Thomas Aquinas and the mediaeval mystics. You read all these fashionable little biologists and physicists and ironists. You know water is H_2O , and therefore don't want to drink. How disgusting to find out the ingredients of what you thought was sparkling and refreshing and clear! But, Lord! man, the miracle and beauty of it are no less. When you know the formulas, you know no more about the life and vitality that is at the basis of it all than you did before. You are much more learned and much less wise. Our young Dionysian here is right. Vitality is the source and the end of being. You never know that vitality except by a mystic intuition, and you never will. Unless you are a mystic at heart, with your ear to the ground of being, your finger on the pulse-beat of reality, you never will know anything or touch anything real or true.'

Helen was watching the faces of her guests as the genial banker-author launched into this unexpected rhetoric and unction. I did, too. I was interested particularly in watching Tommy. He seemed a little bored with Richard's search for a way of wisdom. Through the Californian's dithyrambs he sat uncomprehending. As the Major talked, he leaned forward, strangely interested.

'Well, All-American halfback, or whatever it is, how does that strike you?' the banker asked suddenly.

Tommy did not answer for a moment. His hand tossed back his wavy hair, and then, quietly, he began:

'The Major here's the only bird who's got down to the essence of the matter. I don't know much about all this, but I do know what's wrong with all of you. There isn't any faith in you, and you can't live without it. You just can't. I know what's the matter with Richard. I know what the matter is with all of you. You go along having a good time, and you think you're very free and up-to-date, and all of that. But then you get a sickening empty feeling. And you don't know where to go or what to do or what counts. Well, I can't give you any good reasons for what I believe. Wasn't it Tertullian or some professor who said, 'I believe because it is absurd'? All you wise birds know so many good reasons for not believing in God, except the best of all reasons for believing in Him, that God is salvation. I've heard you all tell me that I'm hypnotized by the sound of the Latin phrases, the music and the incense, and that religion saves me from thinking. You all think maybe religion is good for me because I'm a kid and it's comforting to an uneasy youngster to believe in a heavenly Father. Well, we're all kids, I think, lost in the world. And my belief saves me from a lot of the torments

you're always getting into, all of you. No matter how mixed up life becomes, or how foolish—and I know all about that as well as you—I have a refuge and a faith. And it does something to you. It steadies your keel, prevents the boat from rocking. It used to help me over the tragedy of a defeat in a big game during the football season. It helped me over real tragedy since my father died; it makes me happier, too, when I am happy. I've got something you all wish you had, a faith by which you could live. I can listen to you all here, and know that I have a certain way to peace. I'd throw all these new psycho-analytical books out of the window for a couple of pages of Thomas à Kempis. He's the voice of an elder brother. He's very comforting; you ought to read him some time. I listen to you all here, and you sound like a lot of little children using a lot of big words that hide you from a simple way to salvation. You'll come back to God some day or you'll go completely to the Devil.'

Tommy was a little surprised at the long speech he had made, and so was every one else. Helen strayed over to the piano and began to play. The room settled down into that listening silence that pervades a group of people intent upon beautiful playing. Helen began, I think, the sixth waltz of Brahms, which no amount of playing can quite hackney, and which seems to say, with exquisite tact, so much of the inexpressible quiet longing of the human heart for peace. Tommy retired into a corner a little frightened at having talked so much. Helen played more, Brahms and Chopin, and a melancholy, subdued, little theme from some new Northern composer. And there was no more about morals that night.

'Well,' Richard said to me, as I left, 'we didn't get very far, did we? But some day I'm going to talk to you about all this. Maybe Tommy has the right dope, after all.'

Some weeks later I got a letter from Richard who was en route to Europe on a hurried trip to London for his firm.

Mid-Ocean, April fifth

Caro Maestro:

One of the really great things about an ocean trip is that it gives you so complete a sense of being detached from your world. Of course there are the wireless bulletins about prize-fights and stock reports, and there are other passengers. But I have been spending my time in a delicious speculative sort of coma.

Lounging out here in a deck-chair all day, as we pound through these endless spaces of sea and sky, I have had a chance for the first time in ten years to think in something like peace. I almost believe that most of the confusion in contemporary thought is due to the fact that it's been done in large cities near steam rivets and the interruptions of a telephone. Surely the great calm conclusions about life must have been arrived at in clear expanses like these. Or is it only a sentimental illusion that high thoughts flourish on mountain-tops and on the wide salt spaces of the sea?

I've been pondering that morals discussion we had at my house. I wonder if it's always been that way with the race, and whether we will ever get over

these nightmares of conflict and torment and indecision. Remember all the points of view we had that evening? Fervint with his Dionysian rhapsodies; the Major asking us to take the whole thing as a farce or to trust to the *élan vital* of economic and social forces to work out their own salvation. Dear old Tommy¹ with his eight-year-old mystic faith. Then there was Bronson, with his new probing scalpel of science, seeking to remove the cancers and clear the complexions of our lives.

We're all driving at the same thing, I believe, and after three calm days at sea, this is what it appears to me to be like. Don't read it if you don't want to. But it might do as notes for a lecture in that moral theory course of yours. Or do you still use the same old yellow notes?

It looks to me as if they are all agreed on one point. The problem is how to make of life a rich and continuously vital experience. Take sex, for example. There's dogma and repression on the one hand, and rebellion and obscenity on the other. Meanwhile sex remains the electric source of all the major poetry and beauty and sublimity possible to life. Isn't it clear that a morality of sex that was in any sense moral would be an art by which we turned all promiscuous animal fire into the most complete and personal and intimate of glories? That seems to me far more important than distinctions between virtue and vice, or freedom and bondage inside marriage or out. I think we've had enough of revolt and propaganda; we've been exorcising devils too long. Isn't time that we tried to make morality an art toward the good, instead of an extermination of evil?

I used to think in my first fine careless rapture of rebellion that happiness lay in those of Dionysus's frenzies that Fervint talks about. But I doubt whether Dionysus had a better time than Apollo. The most intense and the most complete life! A sensitive equilibrium! I suspect that that is what my generation is looking for. 'Golden anaemia,' Fervint calls it. But the intensity and concentration of the athlete or the clear splendor of César Franck are hardly anaemia, are they?

We all thought we'd be happy if we were freed from the old shibboleths that mastered us. Felicity lay in freedom. We've had a glorious time laying the ghosts of old superstitions, of prejudices, meannesses and cruelties and lies. God, the table of the laws, divine right of kings and governments, the academic in the arts, the authoritative in education. But, as somebody in our little group said the other day, we've found a great emptiness in the cosmos denuded of God and a great futility in the words that used to pass as ideals. All the smart little cynics have to keep on being smart, or their hearts would break. They can't stand the looks of the world they see with their sharp, little candid eyes. They look for the glories of love, and they find the naked absurdities of lust. They flush with the creative movement of life, and they are brought bang-up against the wormy disintegration of death. They see the spirit of man as a feeble and meaningless flicker in a universal irony of dust and extinction. The first course I took in philosophy was in contemporary thought, and its net effect was to give me a bad case of the blues.

I envy Tommy sometimes his naïve little faith. It makes him at home in an immense, stable world, full of the glamour of old traditional loveliness and the peace of a certain God. He has talked to me once of going into a monastery. I shouldn't be surprised if he did. I do not think he would be unhappy there. But I rather think there's something wrong with a craving for peace. It's pictured as a desire for serenity; it's usually a thirst for torpor. I do not think I envy Tommy his peace, but his confidence. We have lost faith in everything, even in life itself. But not completely. To live at all is an act of faith; it is an instinctive and passionate allegiance to the vitality that will not die and will not face its own extinction. None of the disillusionists can quench the fact of life or their faith in it; all their barbed shafts are expressions of it. That much there is to bank on.

But what has fretted us of our generation is that there is no longer any pattern of living we accept, that we can acquiesce in. We find no pattern and no purpose, and we therefore call it all futile or chaos. Well, life is here to make what patterns of we will. With a little good-will and intelligence, those patterns may be made very beautiful indeed. And if our lives are not eternal, these patterns may be eternal beacons for other lives to follow.

Whenever we find a good in life, I've noticed, we cease to ask reasons for living. Love is one of those goods. It is as rare, I suppose, in its perfection, as beauty or genius. We've messed it up a lot, too, with our nasty little pruderies and repressions, and our loud, hoarse, young rebellions. But there is no reason why we cannot invent a way of success for it, and make of it a success. Mangled as it is at present, it is one of the most unalloyed of all felicities. It might be made a complete happiness. I don't know, for sure, but it is, perhaps, the only happiness there is possible to the race.

Then there are the senses. We starve them or we surfeit them. They've always given us the choice between being an aesthete or an ascetic. You'd think one really *had* to be a saint or a sybarite. But it seems so clear that we might make of our senses the avenues to an ambiently lovely world. I wonder will beauty ever become naturalized in America? At present it is treated as a holy sacrament by highbrows in concert halls and museums. Or it is regarded as a disreputable exotic. To a lot of people, the only place for art is in a gallery, and for artists in Bohemia. It never seems to occur to any one that in a world made pervasively beautiful, and in a life made an art, people might cease to be so anguished for the true and for the good.

For a little while during my year in Europe I felt that in a thoroughly disordered society the only plausible business for a man was to bask in the perfections of the fine arts. In a sonata by Mozart every sound has a place and a meaning; in a Greek marble there is nothing confused or raucous or awry. How different from experience, where there are whole days in life without meaning, and how many lives without meaning in the world!

I've come to realize, though, that a man is a man first, and only incidentally an aesthete, and I don't quite see how we can pass the buck of making some kind of beauty and order out of our ramshackle, old civilization. It isn't so

easy any more to pass the buck to God. Even those who believe in Him most literally have had to concede that He is only doing the best He can do in the circumstances. I suppose the nearest thing I have to Tommy's faith is faith in life itself, and in the human intelligence which can make something of it.

That faith, like any other, demands a few loyalties and a few sacrifices. I presume that that's what irks a great many of my generation. We're afraid of that word 'sacrifice.' We've seen so many offerings to false gods, mammon and imperialism and righteousness, and all the savage and cruel codes that have sucked the blood of unquestioning young idealists. We've seen lives wrecked and snuffed out on altars of respectability, of religion, of patriotism. We are a little suspicious of anything that comes to us demanding sacrifice or discipline.

We're just beginning to discover that every art and every achievement is a god in our own minds. If that god is ever to become incarnate in the flesh and blood of our days, there are certain sufferings and austerities and sacrifices we'll have to make for it. I found that out when I first tried to make a team. I find it every time I try to write a sonnet or watch Helen struggle with the hard beauties of César Franck.

If we came to look upon life itself as the raw materials of beauty, I think morals would come to seem one of the most fascinating of all the arts. Its canvas would dwarf that of any painter. The harmonies one might create of it would make the chords of the usual musician seem tinkling in comparison. Through our faith in life and in our own creative imagination, we may bring into our industry, our education, and our society, a decency, vitality, and freedom. If we do, we shall have created a more serious and engrossing loveliness than those fripperies called beauty by the refugee from the world who dwells in the Ivory Tower.

I think this desire for a life no less radiant and complete than that found at moments in the fine arts, accounts for a good deal of the rebellion and cynicism of me and my contemporaries. We have been embittered by the thought of how beautiful life could be if we only ceased to be stupid. We know that no achievement is possible even in the minor arts without sincerity, directness, and freedom. We know that these things are still more indispensable conditions in the major art of life. But we've probably been protesting too much. It's about time we set about the business of creation itself. We will never do it if we stay in our cramped little hates and spleen. It is a work that will require love to begin. It will mean discipline in the doing. And its goal and its fulfillment will be joy.

It may be that this bracing sea air has gone to my head, but wasn't it Faith and Hope and Love of old that were supposed to bring us to the City of God? Perhaps Faith and Hope and Love will build the City of God among us. Along with Works. And the works will keep us too busy for mere irony or rebellion or despair.

That seems to me religion enough, and enough religion for my generation.

Il suo devotissimo, RICHARD KANE

RESEARCH PAPERS

MARCO POLO¹

by Eileen Power

LET us go back in mind—as would that we could go back in body—to the year 1268. It is a year which makes no great stir in the history books, but it will serve us well. In those days, as in our own, Venice lay upon her lagoons, a city like a sea-bird's nest afloat on the shallow waves, a city like a ship, moored to the land but only at home upon the seas, the proudest city in all the Western world. For only consider her position. Lying at the head of the Adriatic, half-way between East and West, on the one great sea thoroughfare of medieval commerce, a Mediterranean seaport, yet set so far north that she was almost in the heart of Europe, Venice gathered into her harbour all the trade routes overland and overseas, on which pack-horses could travel or ships sail. Merchants bringing silk and spices, camphor and ivory, pearls and scents and carpets from the Levant and from the hot lands beyond it, all came to port in Venice. For whether they came by way of Egypt sailing between the low banks of the Nile and jolting on camels to Alexandria, or whether they came through the rich and pleasant land of Persia and the Syrian desert to Antioch and Tyre, or whether they slowly pushed their way in a long, thin caravan across the highlands of Central Asia and south of the Caspian Sea to Trebizond, and so sailed through the Black Sea and the Dardanelles, Venice was their natural focus. Only Constantinople might have rivalled her, and Constantinople she conquered. To Venice, therefore, as if drawn by a magnet, came the spoils of the East, and from Venice they went by horse across the Alps by the Brenner and St. Gothard passes to Germany and France, or in galleys by way of the Straits of Gibraltar to England and Flanders; and the galleys and pack-horses came back again to Venice, laden with the metals of Germany, the furs of Scandinavia, the fine wool of England, the cloth of Flanders, and the wine of France.

Is it not true to say that Venice was the proudest city on earth, *la noble cite que l'en apele Venise, qui est orendroit la plus bele dou siecle*?² Life was a fair and splendid thing for those merchant princes who held the gorgeous East in fee in the year of grace 1268. In that year traders in great stone counting-houses, lapped by the waters of the canals, were checking, book in hand, their

¹ Condensed from *Medieval People*. By permission of and arrangement with Houghton Mifflin Company.

² Canale, *Cronique*, p. 270.

sacks of cloves, mace and nutmegs, cinnamon and ginger from the Indies, ebony chessmen from Indo China, ambergris from Madagascar, and musk from Tibet. In that year the dealers in jewels were setting prices upon diamonds from Golconda, rubies and lapis lazuli from Badakhshan, and pearls from the fisheries of Ceylon; and the silk merchants were stacking up bales of silk and muslin and brocade from Bagdad and Yezd and Malabar and China. In that year young gallants on the Rialto (scented gallants, but each, like Shakespeare's Antonio, with a ship venturing into port somewhere in the Levant) rubbed elbows with men of all nations, heard travellers' tales of all lands, and at dawn slipped along the canals in gondolas (not black in those days, but painted and hung with silk), saluting the morning with songs; and the red-haired ladies of Venice whom centuries later Titian loved to paint, went trailing up and down the marble steps of their palaces, with all the brocades of Persia on their backs and all the perfumes of Arabia to sweeten their little hands.

It was in that year too, that one Martino da Canale, a clerk in the customs house, began to busy himself (like Chaucer after him) less with his accounts than with writing in the delectable French language ("por ce que langue franceise cort parmi le monde, et est la plus delitable a lire et a oir que nule autre") a chronicle of Venice. It is of the water, watery, Canale's chronicle, like Ariel's dirge; he has indeed, "that intenseness of feeling which seems to resolve itself into the elements which it contemplates." Here is nothing indeed, of "the surge and thunder of the Odyssey," but the lovely words sparkle like the sun on the waters of the Mediterranean, and like a refrain, singing itself in and out of the narrative, the phrase recurs, "Li tens estoit clers et biaux . . . et lors quant il furent en mer, li mariniers drecent les voiles au vent, et lesserent core a ploine voiles les mes parmi la mer a la force dou vent";¹ for so much of the history of Venice was enacted upon deck. It is a passing proud chronicle, too, for Canale was, and well he knew it, a citizen of no mean city.

Now would I [he says] that every one and all know for ever the works of the Venetians, who they were and whence they came and what they are, and how they made the noble city which is called Venice, which is this day the fairest in the world. And I would that all those who are now living and those who are to come know how the noble city is builded and how all good things abound in her, and how the sire of the Venetians, the noble Doge, is powerful, and what nobility is found therein and the prowess of the Venetian people, and how they are all perfect in the faith of Jesu Christ and obedient to holy Church, and how they never disobey the commandment of holy Church. Within this noble Venice there dares to dwell neither heretic, nor usurer, murderer, thief nor robber. And I will tell you the names of all the Doges that have been in Venice, one after the other, and what they did to the honour of holy Church and of their noble City. And I will tell you the names of the noble captains whom the noble Doges sent in their time to lay low their enemies, and concerning the victories

¹ "The weather was clear and fine . . . and when they were at sea, the mariners let out the sails to the wind, and let the ships run with spread sails before the wind over the sea." See, for instance, Canale, *op cit.*, pp 320, 326.

that they won I will have you know, for it is fitting. . . . In the year of the incarnation of our Lord Jesu Christ MCCLXVII years, in the time of Milord Renier Zeno, the high Doge of Venice, I laboured and strove until I found the ancient history of the Venetians, whence they came first and how they builded the noble city called Venice, which is to-day the fairest and the pleasantest in the world, full of beauty and of all good things. Merchandise flows through this noble city even as water flows from the fountains, and the salt water runs through it and round it and in all places save in the houses and the streets; and when the citizens go abroad they can return to their houses by land or by water, as they will. From all parts there come merchandise and merchants, who buy merchandise as they will and take it back to their own countries. Within this town is found food in great plenty, bread and wine, land fowl and river fowl, fresh meat and salt, and sea fish and river fish. . . . You may find within this fair town many men of gentle birth, both old men and young *damoisaus* in plenty, and merchants with them, who buy and sell, and money changers and citizens of all crafts, and therewith mariners of all sorts, and ships to carry them to all lands and galleys to lay low their enemies. And in this fair town is also great plenty of ladies and damsels and maidens, very richly apparelled.¹

It happened that there was a new Doge that year, our year 1268, Lorenzo Tiepolo by name, and a great procession of the gilds took place before the palace on the Piazza of St. Mark to welcome his accession. Martino da Canale was watching it and wrote it all down in his chronicle. First came the navy sailing past in the harbour, fifty galleys and other ships, with their crews cheering and shouting on deck. Then came the gilds on foot: first the master smiths, with garlands on their heads and banners and trumpets; then the furriers apparelled in samite and scarlet silk, with mantles of ermine and vair; then the weavers richly bedight, and the ten master tailors in white with crimson stars. Then the master clothworkers passed, carrying boughs of olive and wearing crowns of olive on their heads; then the fustian makers in furred robes of their own weaving, and the quilt makers with garlands of gilt beads and white cloaks sewn with fleurs-de-lis, marching two by two, with little children singing *chansonnettes* and *cobles* before them. Then came the makers of cloth of gold, all in cloth of gold, and their servants in cloth of gold or of purple, followed by the mercers in silk and the butchers in scarlet, the fish sellers robed and furred and garlanded, and the master barbers, having with them two riders attired as knights-errant, and four captive damsels, strangely garbed. Then came the glass-workers in scarlet furred with vair, and gold-fringed hoods, and rich garlands of pearls, carrying flasks and goblets of the famous Venetian glass before them, and the comb and lantern makers, with a lantern full of birds to let loose in the Doge's presence, and the goldsmiths wearing wreaths and necklaces of gold and silver beads and sapphires, emeralds, diamonds, topazes, jacinths, amethysts, rubies, jasper, and carbuncles. Masters and servants alike were sumptuously clad, and almost all wore gold fringes on their hoods and garlands of gilded beads. Each craft was accompanied by its band of divers instruments, and bore with it silver cups and flagons of wine, and all marched in fair order, singing ballads and songs of greeting,

¹ Canale, *op. cit.*, pp. 268-72.

and saluted the Doge and Dogaressa in turn, crying "Long live our lord, the noble Doge Lorenzo Tiepolo!" Gild after gild they marched in their splendour, lovely alike to ear and eye; and a week fled before the rejoicings were ended and all had passed in procession. Canale surpasses himself here, for he loved State ceremonies; he gives a paragraph to the advance of each gild, its salutation and withdrawal, and the cumulative effect of all the paragraphs is enchanting, like a prose ballade, with a repeated refrain at the end of every verse.¹

What, they lived once thus in Venice, where the merchants were the kings,
Where St. Mark's is, where the Doges used to wed the sea with rings?

Listening to the magnificent salutation of the Doge by the priests of St. Mark's, "Criste vince, Criste regne, Criste inpere. Notre signor Laurens Teuples, Des gracie, inclit Dus de Venise, Dalmace atque Groace, et dominator de la quarte partie et demi de tot l'enmire de Romanie, sauvement, honor, vie, et victoire. Saint Marc, tu le aie,"² who, hearing, could have doubted that Venice, defier of Rome and conqueror of Constantinople, was the finest, richest, most beautiful, and most powerful city in the world?

But was she? Listen and judge. Thousands of miles away from Venice, across the lands and seas of Asia, a little south of the Yangtze River and close to the sea stood the city of Kinsai or Hangchow, the capital of the Sung emperors, who ruled Southern China, not yet (in 1268) conquered by the Tartars.³ Like Venice, Kinsai stood upon lagoons of water and was intersected by innumerable canals. It was a hundred miles in circuit, not counting the suburbs which stretched round it, and there was not a span of ground which was not well peopled. It had twelve great gates, and each of the twelve quarters which lay within the gates was greater than the whole of Venice. Its main street was two hundred feet wide, and ran from end to end of the city, broken every four miles by a great square, lined with houses, gardens, palaces, and the shops of the artisans, who were ruled by its twelve great craft guilds. Parallel with the main street was the chief canal, beside which stood the stone warehouses of the merchants who traded with India. Twelve thousand stone bridges spanned its waterways, and those over the principal canals were high enough to allow ships with their tapering masts to pass below, while the carts and horses passed overhead. In its market-places men chaffered for game and peaches, sea-fish, and wine made of rice and spices; and in the lower part of the surrounding houses were shops, where spices and drugs and silk, pearls and every sort of manufactured article were sold. Up and down the streets of Kinsai moved lords and merchants clad in silk, and the most beautiful ladies in the world swayed languidly past in embroidered litters, with jade pins in their black hair and jewelled earrings swinging against their smooth cheeks.

¹ Canale, *op cit.*, pp. 602-26.

² *Ibid.*, p. 600.

³ This account of Hangchow is taken partly from Marco Polo, *Travels*, bk. II, ch. LXVIII, and partly from Odoric Pordenone, Yule, *Cathay and the Way Thither*, pp 113-20.

On one side of this city lay a beautiful lake (famous in Chinese history, and still one of the fairest prospects upon earth), studded with wooded islands, on which stood pavilions with charming names: "Lake Prospect," "Bamboo Chambers," "The House of the Eight Genii," and "Pure Delight." Here, like the Venetians, the men of Kinsai came for pleasure parties in barges, nobly hung and furnished, the cabins painted with flowers and mountain landscapes, and looking out they saw on one side the whole expanse of the city, its palaces, temples, convents, and gardens, and on the other the stretch of clear water, crowded with coloured pleasure boats, over which came echoing the high, clear voices and the tinkling instruments of the revellers. There is no space in which to tell of the King's palace, with its gardens and orchards, its painted pavilions, and the groves where the palace ladies coursed the game with dogs, and, tired of the pastime, flung off their robes and ran to the lake, where they disported themselves like a shoal of silver fishes. But a word must be said of the junks, which came sailing into the harbour four and twenty miles away, and up the river to the city; and of the great concourse of ships which came to Zaiton (perhaps the modern Amoy), the port of the province. Here every year came a hundred times more pepper than came to the whole of Christendom through the Levantine ports. Here from Indo China and the Indies came spices and aloes and sandalwood, nutmegs, spikenard and ebony, and riches beyond mention. Big junks laded these things, together with musk from Tibet, and bales of silk from all the cities of Mansi,¹ and sailed away in and out of the East India Archipelago, with its spice-laden breezes billowing their sails, to Ceylon. There merchants from Malabar and the great trading cities of Southern India took aboard their cargoes and sold them in turn to Arab merchants, who in their turn sold them to the Venetians in one or other of the Levantine ports. Europeans who saw Zaiton and the other Chinese seaports in after years were wont to say that no one, not even a Venetian, could picture to himself the multitude of trading vessels which sailed upon those Eastern seas and crowded into those Chinese harbours. They said also with one accord that Kinsai was without doubt the finest and richest and noblest city in the world. To the men of Kinsai, Venice would have been a little suburb and the Levant a backyard. The whole of the East was their trading field, and their wealth and civilization were already old when Venice was a handful of mud huts peopled by fishermen.

Nor was Kinsai alone and unmatched in all its wonder and beauty, for a three days' journey from it stood Sugui, which to-day we call Suchow, lying also on the great canal, with its circumference of twenty miles, its prodigious multitudes swarming the streets, its physicians, philosophers, and magicians; Sugui, with the ginger which was so common that forty pounds of it might be bought for the price of a Venetian silver groat, the silk which was manufactured in such vast quantities that all the citizens were dressed in it and still ships laden with it sailed away; Sugui under whose jurisdiction were sixteen wealthy cities, where trade and the arts flourished. If you had not seen Hang-

¹ Mansi or Manji was Southern China and Cathay was Northern China.

chow, you would have said that there was no city in the world, not Venice nor Constantinople nor another worthy to be named in the same breath with Sugui. The Chinese indeed, seeing the riches and beauty of these two cities, doubted whether even the pleasant courts of heaven could show their equal and proudly quoted the proverb:

There's Paradise above, 'tis true
But here below we've Hang and Su.¹

Kinsai seems far enough away in all conscience from Venice in the year 1268, and Venice was all unwitting of its existence, far beyond the sunrise. Yet there was in the city of the lagoons that year, watching the same procession of the gilds which Canale watched, a boy who was destined to link them for ever in the minds of men—a lean lad of fourteen, Marco Polo by name, who was always kicking his heels on the quay and bothering foreign sailors for tales of distant lands. He heard all they had to tell him very willingly, storing it up in that active brain of his, for his curiosity was insatiable; but always the tales that he heard most willingly were about the Tartars.

At this time the Tartars were at the height of their power in the West and the East. Tartars ruled at Peking all over Northern China, Corea, Mongolia, Manchuria, and Tibet, and took tribute from Indo China and Java. Tartars were spread over Central Asia, holding sway in Turkestan and Afghanistan. The Golden Horde ruled the Caucasus, a large part of Russia, and a piece of Siberia. Tartars held sway in Persia, Georgia, Armenia, and a part of Asia Minor. When the great Mangu Khan died in 1259, one empire lay spread across Asia and Europe, from the Yellow River to the Danube. There had been nothing like it in the world before, and there was nothing like it again, until the Russian Empire of modern times. By 1268 it was beginning to split up into the four kingdoms of China, Central Asia, Russia, and Persia, but still it was one people. Now, the attitude of the West to the Tartars at this time was very interesting. At first it feared them as a new scourge of God, like Attila and his Huns; they overran Poland, ravaged Hungary, and seemed about to break like a great flood upon the West, and overwhelm it utterly. Then the tide rolled back. Gradually the West lost its first stupefaction and terror and began to look hopefully towards the Tartars as a possible ally against its age-old foe, the Moslem. The Christians of the West knew that the Tartars had laid the Moslem power low through the length and breadth of Asia, and they knew too, that the Tartars had no very sharply defined faith and were curious of all beliefs that came their way. Gradually the West became convinced that the Tartars might be converted to Christianity, and fight side by side beneath the Cross against the hated Crescent. There grew up the strange legend of Prester John, a Christian priest-king, ruling somewhere in the heart of Asia; and indeed little groups of Nestorian Christians did still survive in Eastern Asia at this time.² Embassies began to pass between Tartar khans and

¹ Yule, *Book of Ser Marco Polo*, II, p. 184.

² For Prester John see *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and Lynn Thorndike, *History of Magic and Experimental Science*, II, 236-45.

Western monarchs, and there began also a great series of missions of Franciscan friars to Tartary, men who were ethnologists and geographers at heart as well as missionaries, and have left us priceless accounts of the lands which they visited. In the year of grace 1268, much was known about Central Asia, for in 1245 the Pope had sent the Italian friar John of Plano Carpini thither, and in 1253 another friar, William of Rubruck, a French Fleming, had been sent by the saintly Louis, King of France. Both got as far as Karakorum, the Tartar camp on the borders of Northern China, though they did not enter China itself. They had brought back innumerable stories about the nomad conquerors, who carried their tents on carts, and drank fermented mares' milk, about the greatness of the khan and his welcome to the strangers from the West, and the interest with which he listened to their preaching.¹ These tales were common property now, and Marco Polo must have listened to them.

Marco Polo was always talking of the Tartars, always asking about them. Indeed, he had reason to be interested in them. This (as we have said) was the year of grace 1268, and eight years before (some, indeed, say fifteen years) his father, Nicolo Polo, and his uncle Maffeo had vanished into Tartary. They were rich merchants, trading with their own ship to Constantinople, and there they had decided to go on a commercial venture into the lands of the Golden Horde, which lay to the north of the Black Sea. So they had sailed over to the Crimea, where they had a counting-house at Soldaia, and taking with them a store of costly jewels, for they were jewel merchants, they had set off on horseback to visit the Khan of the West Tartars. So much the Venetians knew, for word had come back from Soldaia of their venture; but they had never returned. And so Marco, kicking his heels upon the quay, caught sailor-men by the sleeve and asked them about those wild horsemen with their mares' milk and their magicians and their droves of cattle; and as he asked he wondered about his father and his uncle, and whether they were dead and lost for ever in the wilds of Tartary. But even while he asked and wondered and kicked his heels on the quay, while the Doge Tiepolo was watching the procession of the gilds and the clerk Canale was adding up customs dues or writing the ancient history of the Venetians, at that very moment the two Polos were slowly and wearily making their way across the heights of Central Asia with a caravan of mules and camels, drawing near to golden Samarcand with its teeming bazaars, coming nearer and nearer to the West; and in the following year, 1269, they reached Acre, and took ship there for Venice, and so at last came home.

They had a strange story to tell, stranger and better than anything the lean, inquisitive boy had heard upon the quays. They had soon disposed of their jewels and they had spent a year at the camp of the Khan of the Golden Horde of Kipchak on the mighty River Volga. Then war broke out between that ruler and the Khan who ruled the Persian Khanate, and it cut off their way back. But Marco's curiosity was inherited; and no Venetian was ever averse to seeing strange lands and seeking out new opportunities for trade; so

¹See *Journal of William de Rubruck to the Eastern Parts*, tr. W. W. Rockhill.

the Polos decided to go on and visit the Khan of Central Asia or Chagatai, and perhaps make their way back to Constantinople by some unfrequented route. They struggled over plains peopled only by tent-dwelling Tartars and their herds, until at last they reached the noble city of Bokhara. They must have followed the line of the Oxus River, and if we reverse the marvellous description which Matthew Arnold wrote of that river's course in *Sohrab and Rustum*, we shall have a picture of the Polos' journey:

But the majestic River floated on,
Out of the mist and hum of that low land,
Into the frosty starlight, and there moved,
Rejoicing, through the hush'd Chorasmian waste
Under the solitary moon; he flow'd
Right for the Polar Star, past Orgunjè,
Brimming and bright and large: then sands begin
To hem his watery march, and dam his streams,
And split his currents; that for many a league
The shorn and parcell'd Oxus strains along
Through beds of sand and matted rushy isles—
Oxus, forgetting the bright speed he had
In his high mountain cradle in Pamere,
A foil'd circuitous wanderer:—till at last
The long'd-for dash of waves is heard, and wide
His luminous home of waters opens, bright
And tranquil, from whose floor the new-bathed stars
Emerge and shine upon the Aral Sea.

For three years the Polos remained at Bokhara, until one day it happened that an embassy came to the city, on its way back from the khan in Persia to the great Khan Kublai, who ruled in far-off China, and to whom all the Tartar rulers owed allegiance. The chief ambassador was struck with the talents and charm of the brothers, who had now become proficient in the Tartar language, and persuaded them to accompany him on his journey to the presence of the Great Khan, who had never yet set eyes on a man of the West, and would, he assured them, receive them honourably. They would not have been Venetians had they refused such an opportunity, and, taking their Venetian servants with them, they journeyed for a year with the Tartar embassy across the heart of Asia, and so reached the great Kublai Khan. Many years later Marco himself described their reception, as they had told it to him:

Being introduced to the presence of the Grand Khan Kublai, the travellers were received by him with the condescension and affability that belonged to his character, and as they were the first Latins who had made their appearance in that country, they were entertained with feasts and honoured with other marks of distinction. Entering graciously into conversation with them, he made earnest inquiries on the subject of the western parts of the world, of the Emperor of the Romans, and of other Christian kings and princes . . . and above all he questioned them particularly respecting the Pope, the affairs of the Church, and the religious worship and doctrine of the Christians. Being well instructed and discreet men, they gave appropriate answers upon all these points, and as they were perfectly

acquainted with the Tartar language, they expressed themselves always in becoming terms; insomuch that the Grand Khan, holding them in high estimation, frequently commanded their attendance.¹

The Great Khan finally decided to send these two intelligent strangers back to their own land on a mission from himself to the Pope, asking for a hundred men of learning to be sent to teach and preach to his Tartars, and for some holy oil from the lamp which burned over Christ's sepulchre in Jerusalem. He provided them with a golden tablet of honour, which acted as a passport and secured that they should be entertained and their journey facilitated from city to city in all his dominions, and so they set forth once more upon their homeward journey. But they were delayed by the dangers and difficulties of travel, "the extreme cold, the snow, the ice, and the flooding of the rivers," and it was three years before they at last reached Acre in the April of 1269, and finding that the Pope had died the year before, and that no election had yet been made, so that they could not immediately accomplish their mission, they decided to visit their home again, and so went back to Venice. There Nicolo found that his wife, who had been with child at his departure, was dead, leaving behind her a son Marco, our young haunter of quays.

This was the marvellous tale which the same Marco drank in from the lips of his new-found father and uncle. But more marvels were to come. For two years the Venetians remained at home, awaiting the election of a Pope in order to deliver the Great Khan's letters; but no election was made, and at last, fearing that Kublai might suspect them of playing him false, they decided to return to the East, and this time they took with them Marco, now a well-grown lad of sixteen or seventeen years with a bright eye that looked everywhere and took in everything, observant and sober beyond his age. But when they got as far as Ayas on the Gulf of Scanderoon, news was brought them of the election of Tebaldo di Piacenza as Pope Gregory X, and as Tebaldo had already interested himself in their mission, they returned with all speed to Acre, and obtained from him letters to the Khan (they had already visited Jerusalem and provided themselves with some of the holy oil), and two Dominican friars, "men of letters and science as well as profound theologians," though not the hundred men of learning for whom the Khan had asked; and so they set out again from Acre in November, 1271. The Dominicans may have been profound theologians, but they were somewhat chicken-hearted adventurers, and when rumours reached them of wars in the district of Armenia, through which they had to pass, they hastily handed over their letters to the Venetians, put themselves under the protection of the Knights Templars, and scuttled back to the coast and safety as fast as they could go, leaving the Polos, "undismayed by perils and difficulties, to which they had long been inured," to proceed alone. Assuredly, St. Francis crows over St. Dominick somewhere in the courts of Heaven; his friars never feared for their skins, as they travelled blithely into the heat of India and the cold of Central

¹ Marco Polo, *Travels*, ch. I.

Asia; and it is easy to imagine the comments of fat William of Rubruck upon the flight of the profound theologians.

The account of this second journey of the Polos may be read in the wonderful book which Marco afterwards wrote to describe the wonders of the world. They went from Lajazzo through Turcomania, past Mount Ararat, where Marco heard tell that Noah's ark rested, and where he first heard also of the oil wells of Baku and the great inland sea of Caspian. Past Mosul and Bagdad they went, through Persia, where brocades are woven and merchants bring caravan after caravan of treasures, to Hormuz, on the Persian Gulf, into which port put the ships from India, laden with spices, drugs, scented woods, and jewels, gold tissues and elephants' teeth. Here they meant to take ship, but they desisted, perhaps because they feared to trust themselves to the flimsy nailless vessels in which the Arabs braved the dangers of the Indian Ocean. So they turned north again and prepared to make the journey by land. They traversed the salt desert of Kerman, through Balk and Khorassan to Badakhshan, where there are horses bred from Alexander the Great's steed Bucephalus, and ruby mines and lapis lazuli. It is a land of beautiful mountains and wide plains, of trout streams and good hunting, and here the brothers sojourned for nearly a year, for young Marco had fallen ill in the hot plains: a breath of mountain air blows through the page in which he describes how amid the clean winds his health came back to him. When he was well, they went on again, and ascended the upper Oxus to the highlands of Pamir, "the roof of the world" as it has been called in our own time, a land of icy cold, where Marco saw and described the great horned sheep which hunters and naturalists still call after him the *Ovis Poli*, a land which no traveller (save Benedict Goes, about 1604) described again, until Lieutenant John Wood of the Indian Navy went there in 1838. Thence they descended upon Kashgar, Yarkand, and Khotan, where jade is found, regions which no one visited again until 1860. From Khotan they pushed on to the vicinity of Lake Lob, never to be reached again until a Russian explorer got there in 1871. They halted there to load asses and camels with provisions, and then, with sinking hearts, they began the terrible thirty days' journey across the Gobi Desert. Marco gives a vivid description of its terrors, voices which seem to call the traveller by name, the march of phantom cavalcades, which lures them off the road at night, spirits which fill the air with sounds of music, drums and gongs and the clash of arms—all those illusions which human beings have heard and seen and feared in every desert and in every age.

What might this be? A thousand fantasies
Begin to throng into my memory,
Of calling shapes, and beckoning shadows dire,
And airy tongues that syllable men's names
On sands and shores and desert wildernesses.

At last they arrived safely at Tangut in the extreme north-west of China, and, skirting the frontier across the great steppes of Mongolia, they were greeted by the Khan's people, who had been sent forward to meet them at the

distance of forty days' journey, and so at last they reached his presence in the May of 1275, having journeyed for three years and a half.

The Great Khan received the Polos kindly, listened attentively to the account which they gave of their mission, commended them for their zeal and fidelity, and received the holy oil and the Pope's gifts with reverence. He then observed the boy Marco, now a "young gallant" and personable enough, no doubt, and inquired who he was, and Nicolo made answer, "Sire, this is your servant, and my son," to which the Khan replied, "He is welcome, and much it pleases me," and enrolled Marco among his own attendants. It was the beginning of a long and close association, for Kublai Khan soon found that Marco Polo was both discreet and intelligent, and began to employ him on various missions. Moreover, Marco, for his part, found that the Great Khan was always desirous of learning the manners and customs of the many tribes over whom he ruled. Kublai had to the full that noble curiosity which is the beginning of wisdom, and it irked him exceedingly that his envoys, good conscientious men, followed their noses upon his business, looking neither to right nor to left, and as like as not never even noticed that among the aboriginal hill tribes of the interior called Miaotzu there prevailed the peculiar and entertaining custom of the *couvade*, wherein

Chinesees go to bed
And lie in, in their ladies' stead.

"The Prince, in consequence," says Marco, "held them for no better than fools and dolts and would say, 'I had far liefer hearken about the strange things and the manners of the different countries you have seen than merely be told of the business you went upon.'"

Very different was the habit of the Venetian, who as a lad had lent ear so readily to swarthy sailors on the Rialto. He quickly picked up several of the languages current in the Great Khan's empire, and here is his account of his proceedings when on a mission to foreign parts:

Perceiving that the Great Khan took a pleasure in hearing accounts of whatever was new to him respecting the customs and manners of people, and the peculiar circumstances of distant countries, he endeavoured, wherever he went, to obtain correct information on these subjects and made notes of all he saw and heard, in order to gratify the curiosity of his master. In short, during seventeen years that he continued in his service, he rendered himself so useful, that he was employed on confidential missions to every part of the empire and its dependencies; and sometimes also he travelled on his own private account, but always with the consent and sanctioned by the authority of the Grand Khan. In such circumstances it was that Marco Polo had the opportunity of acquiring a knowledge, either by his own observation or by what he collected from others, of so many things until his time unknown, respecting the Eastern parts of the world, and these he diligently and regularly committed to writing. . . . And by this means he obtained so much honour that he provoked the jealousy of other officers of the court.¹

It is small wonder that when first the lad came back with his reports the Great Khan and his courtiers marvelled and exclaimed, "If this young man live he will assuredly be a person of great worth and ability."

¹ Marco Polo, *Travels*, pp. 21-22.

It was while on these various public missions that Marco Polo journeyed through the provinces of Shansi, Shensi, and Szechuen, and skirted the edge of Tibet to Yunnan, and entered Northern Burma, lands unknown again to the West until after 1860. For three years he was himself governor of the great city of Yangchow, which had twenty-four towns under its jurisdiction, and was full of traders and makers of arms and military accoutrements. He visited Karakorum in Mongolia, the old Tartar capital, and with his Uncle Maffeo spent three years in Tangut. On another occasion he went on a mission to Cochín China, and by sea to the southern states of India, and he has left a vivid picture of the great trading cities of Malabar. He might indeed have pondered with Ulysses,

I am become a name
For always roaming with a hungry heart,
Much have I seen and known, cities of men,
And manners, climates, countries, governments,
Myself not least, but honoured of them all.

He describes the great capital Cambaluc (Peking) in the north, and the beautiful Kinsai (Hangchow) in the south. He describes the Khan's summer palace at Shandu, with its woods and gardens, its marble palace, its bamboo pavilion swung like a tent from two hundred silken cords, its stud of white mares, and its wonder-working magicians. Indeed his description of the summer palace is better known to Englishmen than any other part of his work, for Shandu is Xanadu, which Coleridge saw in a dream after he had been reading Marco's book and wove into wonderful verse:

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure dome decree,
Where Alph the sacred river ran,
Past caverns measureless to man,
Down to a sunless sea.

And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree,
And here were forests, ancient as the hills
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

Nor is it only palaces which Marco Polo describes, for he tells of the great canal and inland river trade of China, the exports and imports at its harbours, the paper money, the system of posts and caravanserais, which linked it together. He gives an unsurpassed picture of that huge, rich, peaceful empire, full of wealth and commerce and learned men and beautiful things, and of its ruler Kublai Khan, one of the noblest monarchs who ever sat upon a throne, who, since "China is a sea that salts all the rivers that flow into it," was far more than a barbarous Mongol khan, was in very truth a Chinese emperor, whose house, called by the Chinese the "Yuan Dynasty," takes its place among the great dynasties of China.

Even more than Marco Polo tells us he must, indeed, have seen. The impersonality of the greater part of the book is its one blemish, for we would

fain know more of how he lived in China. There is some evidence that he consorted with the Mongol conquerors rather than with the Chinese, and that Chinese was not one of the languages which he learned. He makes no mention of several characteristic Chinese customs, such as the compressed feet of the women, and fishing with cormorants (both of which are described by Odoric of Pordenone after him); he travelled through the tea districts of Fo-kien, but he never mentions tea-drinking, and he has no word to say even of the great Wall.¹ And how typical a European he is, in some ways, for all his keen interest in new and strange things. "They are," he says of the peaceful merchants and scholars of Suchow, "a pusillanimous race and solely occupied with their trade and manufactures. In these indeed they display considerable ability, and if they were as enterprising, manly, and warlike as they are ingenious, so prodigious is their number that they might not only subdue the whole of the province, but carry their rule further still."² Nearly five hundred years later we find the same judgment expressed in different words: "Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay." The answer is a question: Would you rather be the pusillanimous Chinese who painted the landscape roll of which a portion is reproduced opposite page 46, or the enterprising, manly, and warlike European of the same period, whose highest achievement in pictorial art is the picture of Marco Polo's embarkation, reproduced opposite page 40? What is civilization and what progress? Yet Marco Polo shows himself throughout his book far from unable to appreciate other standards than those of his own land and religion, for of Sakya-muni Buddha he says that, "had he been a Christian he would have been a great saint of our Lord Jesus Christ," and he could honour Kublai as that great Khan deserved.

But we must return to the history of the Polos in China. From time to time in Marco's book we hear also of his father and uncle, travelling about the empire, growing rich by trade, and amassing a store of those jewels, in the value of which they were so skilled, even helping the Khan to reduce a rebel town, by constructing siege engines for him on the European model, handy Venetians that they were, who could lay their hands to anything.³ Without doubt they were proud of their Marco, who from an inquisitive lad had grown to so wise and observant a man, and had risen to so high a position. So for seventeen years the three Polos abode in the Khan's service in China. The long months slipped by; and at last they began to feel upon them a longing to see Venice and the lagoons again, and to hear Mass once more beneath the majestic roof of St. Mark's before they died. Moreover, Kublai Khan was growing old himself, and the favour which he had always shown to them had excited some jealousy among his own people, and they feared what might happen when he died. But the old Khan was adamant to all their prayers; wealth and honours were theirs for the asking, but he would not let them go. They might, indeed, have died in China, and we of the West might never

¹ On Marco Polo's omissions see Yule, *Book of Ser Marco Polo*, I, Introduction, p. 110.

² Marco Polo, *Travels*, p. 288.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 281 f.

have heard of Marco Polo or of Kublai Khan, but for a mere accident, a stroke of fate, which gave them their chance. In 1286 Arghun, the Khan of Persia, lost by death his favourite wife Bolgana, and, according to her dying wish, he sent ambassadors to the Court of Peking to ask for another bride from her own Mongol tribe. Their overland route home again was endangered by a war, and they therefore proposed to return by sea. Just at that moment, Marco Polo happened to return from a voyage on which he had been sent, and spoke with such assurance of the ease with which it had been accomplished, that the three ambassadors conceived a strong desire to take with them all three of these ingenious Venetians, who seemed to know so much about ships. Thus it was that the great Khan was prevailed upon, very reluctantly, to let them go.

Early in 1292 they set sail from the busy port of Zaiton in fourteen big Chinese junks (of which Marco, writing of the shipping of the Indian and China seas, has left an excellent description),¹ with the three envoys, the princess, a beautiful girl of seventeen, "moult bele dame et avenant," says Marco, who had an eye for pretty ladies, and a large suite of attendants. One version of Marco's book says that they took with them also the daughter of the king of Mansi, one of those Sung princesses who in happier days had wandered beside the lake in Hangchow, and who had no doubt been brought up at Cambaluc by the care of Kublai Khan's favourite queen, the Lady Jamui. The voyage was a long and difficult one; they suffered lengthy delays in Sumatra, Ceylon, and Southern India, occupied by Marco in studying the sea charts of the coast of India which the Arab pilots showed him, and adding to his knowledge of these parts, which he had already visited. Thus it was over two years before the junks reached Persia, and two of the three envoys and a large number of their suite had died by the way. When at last they landed, it was found that Arghun, the prospective bridegroom, had meanwhile died too, leaving his throne in the charge of a regent for his young son. But on the regent's advice a convenient solution of the difficulty was found by handing the princess over to this prince, and Marco and his uncles duly conducted her to him in the province of Timochain, where Marco Polo noticed that the women were "in my opinion the most beautiful in the world," where stood the famed and solitary *arbor secco*, and where men still told tales of great Alexander and Darius. There they took leave of their princess, who had come on the long voyage to love them like fathers, so Marco says, and wept sorely when they parted. It was while they were still in Persia, where they stayed for nine months after handing over the princess, that the Polos received news of the death of the Great Khan whom they had served so faithfully for so many years. He died at the ripe age of eighty, and with his death a shadow fell over Central Asia, darkening the shining yellow roofs of Cambaluc,

the barren plains
Of Sericana, where Chineses drive
With sails and wind their cany waggons light,

¹ Marco Polo, *Travels*, pp. 321-23.

the minarets of Persia, and the tents of wild Kipchak Tartars, galloping over the Russian steppes. So wide had been the sway of Kublai Khan. A shadow fell also upon the heart of Marco Polo. It was as though a door had clanged to behind him, never to open again. "In the course of their journey," he says, "our travellers received intelligence of the Great Khan having departed this life, which entirely put an end to all prospects of their revisiting those regions." So he and his elders went on by way of Tabriz, Trebizond, and Constantinople to Venice, and sailed up to the city of the lagoons at long last at the end of 1295.

A strange fairy-tale legend has come down to us about the return of the Polos. "When they got thither," says Ramusio, who edited Marco's book in the fifteenth century, "the same fate befell them as befell Ulysses, who when he returned after his twenty years' wanderings to his native Ithaca was recognized by nobody." When, clad in their uncouth Tartar garb, the three Polos knocked at the doors of the Ca' Polo, no one recognized them, and they had the greatest difficulty in persuading their relatives and fellow-Venetians that they were indeed those Polos who had been believed dead for so many years. The story goes that they satisfactorily established their identity by inviting all their kinsmen to a great banquet, for each course of which they put on a garment more magnificent than the last, and finally bringing in their coarse Tartar coats, they ripped open the seams and the lining thereof, "upon which there poured forth a great quantity of precious stones, rubies, sapphires, carbuncles, diamonds, and emeralds, which had been sewn into each coat with great care, so that nobody could have suspected that anything was there. . . . The exhibition of such an extraordinary and infinite treasure of jewels and precious stones, which covered the table, once more filled all present with such astonishment that they were dumb and almost beside themselves with surprise: and they at once recognized these honoured and venerated gentlemen in the Ca' Polo, whom at first they had doubted, and received them with the greatest honour and reverence."¹ Human nature has changed little since the thirteenth century. The precious stones are a legend, but no doubt the Polos brought many with them, for they were jewel merchants by trade; they had had ample opportunities for business in China, and the Great Khan had loaded them with "rubies and other handsome jewels of great value" to boot. Jewels were the most convenient form in which they could have brought home their wealth. But the inquiring Marco brought other things also to tickle the curiosity of the Venetians, as he lets fall from time to time in his book. He brought, for example, specimens of the silky hair of the Tangut yak, which his countrymen much admired, the dried head and feet of a musk deer, and the seeds of a dye plant (probably indigo) from Sumatra, which he sowed in Venice, but which never came up, because the climate was not sufficiently warm.² He brought presents also for the Doge; for an inventory made in 1351 of things found in the palace of Marino Faliero includes among others a ring given by Kublai Khan, a Tartar collar, a three-bladed sword, an Indian brocade, and a

¹ Yule, *Book of Ser Marco Polo*, I, Introd., pp. 4-8.

² Marco Polo, *op. cit.*, pp. 136, 138, 344.

book "written by the hand of the aforesaid Marco," called *De locis mirabilibus Tartarorum*.¹

The rest of Marco Polo's life is quickly told. The legend goes that all the youth of Venice used to resort to the Ca' Polo in order to hear his stories, for not even among the foreign sailors on the quays, where once the boy Marco had wandered and asked about the Tartars, were stories the like of his to be heard. And because he was always talking of the greatness of Kublai Khan's dominions, the millions of revenue, the millions of junks, the millions of riders, the millions of towns and cities, they gave him a nickname and jestingly called him Marco *Milione*, or *Il Milione* which is, being interpreted, "Million Marco"; and the name even crept into the public documents of the Republic, while the courtyard of his house became known as the *Corte Milione*. To return from legend to history, the ancient rivalry between Venice and Genoa had been growing during Marco Polo's absence, nor had Venice always prevailed. Often as her galleys sailed,

dipping deep
For Famagusta and the hidden sun
That rings black Cyprus with a lake of fire, . . .
Questing brown slaves or Syrian oranges,
The pirate Genoese
Hell raked them till they rolled
Blood, water, fruit, and corpses up the hold.

At last in 1298, three years after Marco's return, a Genoese fleet under Lamba Doria sailed for the Adriatic, to bate the pride of Venice in her own sea. The Venetians fitted out a great fleet to meet it, and Marco Polo, the handy man who knew so much about navigation, albeit more skilled with Chinese junks than with Western ships, went with it as gentleman commander of a galley. The result of the encounter was a shattering victory for the Genoese off Curzola. Sixty-eight Venetian galleys were burnt, and seven thousand prisoners were haled off to Genoa, among them Marco Polo, who had now a taste of the results of that enterprise, manliness, and warfare, whose absence he so deprecated in the men of Suchow.

But soon there began to run through the streets and courtyards of Genoa a rumour that in prison there lay a certain Venetian captain, with tales so wonderful to beguile the passing hour that none could tire of hearing them; and anon the gallants and sages and the bold ladies of Genoa were flocking, just as the men of the Rialto, had flocked before, to hear his stories of Kublai Khan,

Lord of the fruits of Tartary
Her rivers silver-pale,
Lord of the hills of Tartary,
Glen, thicket, wood, and dale,
Her flashing stars, her scented breeze,
Her trembling lakes, like foamless seas,
Her bird-delighting citron-trees
In every purple vale.

¹ Yule, *op. cit.*, I, Intro., p. 79.

"Messer Marco," so runs Ramusio's account of the tradition which lingered in Venice in his day, "finding himself in this position, and witnessing the general eagerness to hear all about Cathay and the Great Khan, which indeed compelled him daily to repeat his story till he was weary, was advised to put the matter in writing; so he found means to get a letter written to his father in Venice, in which he desired the latter to send those notes and memoranda, which he had brought home with him."

It happened that in prison with Marco Polo there lay a certain Pisan writer of romances, Rusticiano by name,¹ who had probably been taken prisoner before at the battle of Melaria (1284), when so many Pisan captives had been carried to Genoa, that the saying arose "He who would see Pisa let him go to Genoa." Rusticiano was skilled in the writing of French, the language *par excellence* of romances, in which he had written versions of the Round Table Tales, and in him Marco Polo found a ready scribe, who took down the stories as he told them, in the midst of the crowd of Venetian prisoners and Genoese gentlemen, raptly drinking in all the wonders of Kublai Khan. It was by a just instinct that, when all was written, Rusticiano prefixed to the tale that same address to the lords and gentlemen of the world, bidding them to take heed and listen, which he had been wont to set at the beginning of his tales of Tristan and Lancelot and King Arthur: "Ye Lords, Emperors and Kings, Dukes and Marquises, Counts, Knights and Burgesses and all ye men who desire to know the divers races of men and the diversities of the different regions of the world, take ye this book and cause it to be read, and here shall ye find the greatest marvels." But he adds, "Marco Polo, a wise and learned citizen of Venice, states distinctly what things he saw and what things he heard from others, for this book will be a truthful one." Marco Polo's truthful marvels were more wonderful even than the exploits of Arthur's knights, and were possibly better suited to the respectable Rusticiano's pen, for his only other claim to distinction in the eyes of posterity seems to be that in his abridgment of the Romance of Lancelot he entirely omits the episode (if episode it can be called) of the loves of Lancelot and Guinevere. "Alas," remarks his French editor, "that the copy of *Lancelot* which fell into the hands of poor Francesca of Rimini was not one of those expurgated by Rusticiano!"²

Marco Polo was released from prison (there must have been mourning in the palaces of Genoa) and returned to Venice at the end of a year. Sometimes hereafter his name occurs in the records of Venice, as he moves about on his lawful occasions.³ In 1305 we find "Nobilis Marchus Polo Milioni" standing surety for a wine smuggler; in 1311 he is suing a dishonest agent who owes him money on the sale of musk (he, Marco, had seen the musk deer in its lair); and in 1323 he is concerned in a dispute about a party wall. We know, too, from his will, that he had a wife named Donata, and three daughters, Fantina, Bellela, and Moreta. Had he loved before, under the alien skies

¹ On Rusticiano see *Ibid.*, *Intro.*, pp. 56 ff.

² *Ibid.*, *Intro.*, p. 61.

³ *Ibid.*, *Intro.*, pp. 67-73.

where his youth was spent, some languid exquisite lady of China, or hardy Tartar maid? Had he profited himself from the strange marriage customs of Tibet, of which he remarks (with one of his very rare gleams of humour), "En cele contree aurent bien aler les jeune de seize anz en vintg quatre"? Had Fantina, Bellela, and Moreta half-brothers, flying their gerfalcons at the quails by the shores of the "White Lake" where the Khan hunted, and telling tales of the half legendary father, who sailed away for ever when they were boys in the days of Kublai Khan? These things we cannot know, nor can we even guess whether he regretted that only daughters sprang from his loins in the city of the lagoons, and no Venetian son to go venturing again to the far-distant country where assuredly he had left a good half of his heart. Perhaps he talked of it sometimes to Peter, his Tartar servant, whom he freed at his death "from all bondage as completely as I pray God to release mine own soul from all sin and guilt." Some have thought that he brought Peter the Tartar with him from the East, and the thought is a pleasant one; but it is more likely that he bought him in Italy, for the Venetians were inveterate slave-owners, and captive Tartars were held of all the slaves the strongest and best. So his life passed; and in 1324 Marco Polo died, honoured much by his fellow-citizens, after making a will which is still preserved in the library of St. Mark's.

A characteristic story of his death-bed is related by a Dominican friar, one Jacopo of Acqui, who wrote some time later. "What he told in the book," says Jacopo, "was not as much as he had really seen, because of the tongues of detractors, who being ready to impose their own lies on others are over hasty to set down as lies what they in their perversity disbelieve or do not understand. And because there are many great and strange things in that book, which are reckoned past all credence, he was asked by his friends on his death-bed to correct the book, by removing everything that went beyond the facts. To which his reply was that he had not told *one half* of what he had really seen."¹ How well one can see that last indignant flash of the dying observer, who in the long years of his youth had taken notes of strange tribes and customs for the wise and gracious Kublai Khan, and whom little men now dared to doubt. Indeed, modern discovery has entirely confirmed the exactitude of Marco Polo's observation. It is true that he sometimes repeated some very tall stories which had been told to him, of dog-faced men in the Andaman Islands and of the "male and female islands" so beloved of mediæval geographers. These were sailors' yarns, and where Marco Polo reports what he has seen with his own eyes, he reports with complete accuracy, nor does he ever pretend to have seen a place which he had not visited. The explorers of our own day, Aurel Stein, Ellsworth Huntington, and Sven Hedin, travelling in Central Asia, have triumphantly vindicated him. "It is," says an eminent French historian, "as though the originals of very old photographs had been suddenly rediscovered: the old descriptions of things which were unchanged could be perfectly superimposed upon present reality,"² and Huntington and

¹ On Rusticiano, see *Ibid*, Introd, p. 54.

² Ch.-V. Langlois in *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, xxxv, p. 259.

Aurel Stein took with them to the inaccessible districts of Central Asia as guide-books the book of the Chinese pilgrim Hiwen Tshang (seventh century) and the book of Marco Polo, and over and over again found how accurate were their descriptions.

The knowledge which Marco Polo had thus brought to Europe, the intercourse between East and West which his experience had shown to be so desirable, continued to grow after him. Merchants and missionaries alike travelled by land or sea eastward to Cathay.¹ Another of those indomitable Franciscan friars, John of Monte Corvino, went out at the age of fifty and became Archbishop of Peking. Churches and houses of friars were founded in some of the Chinese cities. Odoric of Pordenone, another friar, and a very good observer too, set forth in 1316 and sailed round India and through the Spice Islands by the same sea route by which the Polos had brought their Tartar princess back to Persia, and so reached Canton, "a city as big as three Venices . . . and all Italy hath not the amount of craft that this one city hath." He left a wonderful account of his travels in China, including descriptions of Peking and Hangchow, and ends his stories with the words, "As for me, from day to day I prepare myself to return to those countries, in which I am content to die, if it pleaseth Him from whom all good things do come"—no doubt where he had left his heart, but he died at Udine in Italy. Later there went out another friar, John Marignolli, who was Papal Legate to Peking from 1342 to 1346.

Nor was it only missionaries who went to Cathay. Odoric, speaking of the wonders of Hangchow, refers for confirmation to Venetian traders who have visited it: "'Tis the greatest city in the whole world, so great indeed that I should scarcely venture to tell of it, but that I have met at Venice people in plenty who have been there"; John of Monte Corvino was accompanied by Master Peter of Lucolongo, "a great merchant," and John Marignolli mentions a *fondaco* for the use of Christian merchants, which was attached to one of the Franciscan convents at Zaiton. Above all, there is Francis Balducci Pegolotti, that intrepid factor who served the great commercial house of the Bardi of Florence, and who wrote a priceless handbook for the use of merchants about 1340. In this he gives detailed instructions for the guidance of a merchant, who wishes to proceed from Tana on the Black Sea by the overland route across Asia to Cathay and back again with £1,200 worth of silk in his caravan, and remarks casually, in passing, "The road you travel from Tana to Cathay is perfectly safe, whether by day or night, according to what merchants say who have used it"—"il chanmino dandare dalla Tana al Ghattajo è *sichurissimo!*"² Think only of what it all means. Marco Polo travelling where no man set foot again till the twentieth century. The bells of the Christian church ringing sweetly in the ears of the Great Khan in Peking. The long road across Central Asia perfectly safe for merchants. The "many persons at Venice" who have walked in the streets of Hangchow. This is in the late thirteenth and

¹ Yule, *Cathay and the Way Thither*, Introd., cxxxii-iv.

² *Ibid.*, II, p. 292; and App., p. LXV.

early fourteenth centuries, in the despised and hidebound Middle Ages. *È sichurissimo!* It takes some of the guilt off Columbus and Vasco da Gama and the age (forsooth) of "discovery."

But a change came over everything in the middle of the fourteenth century. Darkness fell again and swallowed up Peking and Hangchow, the great ports, the crowding junks, the noble civilization. No longer was the great trade route *sichurissimo*, and no longer did Christian friars chant their masses in Zaiton. The Tartar dynasty fell and the new rulers of China reverted to the old anti-foreign policy; moreover, Islam spread its conquests all over Central Asia and lay like a rampart between the Far East and the West, a great wall of intolerance and hatred stronger by far than the great wall of stone which the Chinese had once built to keep out the Tartars. All Marco Polo's marvels became no more than a legend, a traveller's tale.

But that great adventurer was not done for yet. Nearly a century and a half after Marco's death a Genoese sea captain sat poring over one of the new printed books, which men were beginning to buy and to hand about among themselves. The book which he was reading was the Latin version of Marco Polo's travels. He was reading it with intentness and indeed with passion. As he read he made notes in the margin; on over seventy pages he made his notes.¹ For time to time he frowned and turned back and read again the tale of those great ports of Cathay and the gold-roofed palaces of Cipangu; and always he wondered how those lands might be reached, now that the wall of darkness covered Central Asia and anarchy blocked the road to the Persian Gulf. One day (may we not see him?) he lifted his head and smote his hand upon the table. "I will sail west," he said. "Maybe I shall find the lost island of Antilha in the western ocean, but maybe on its far rim I shall indeed come to Cipangu, for the world is round, and somewhere in those great seas beyond the coast of Europe must lie Marco Polo's rich Cathay. I will beseech the kings of England and of Spain for a ship and a ship's company, and the silk and the spices and the wealth shall be theirs. I will sail West," said the Genoese sea captain, and he smote his thigh. "I will sail West, West, West!" And this was the last of Messer Marco's marvels; he discovered China in the thirteenth century, when he was alive, and in the fifteenth, when he was dead, he discovered America!

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SURVEYORS of the social scene inform us that we are living in an age which is characterized by revolution in all departments of life. On all sides there is evidence that research and experimentation have brought about the greatest scientific era which the world has ever known. Scientific discoveries having been applied chiefly to industry, an industrial era has resulted which has revolutionized living conditions. Compelled by industry, people are congregating in large cities which, because of the rapidly developing industries and the increasing ease of communication, are constantly growing larger and more crowded—while life in them is becoming more complex and more intense. Improved communication has multiplied the sensations which crowd in upon us. Travel, increased opportunity for education, enrich and fertilize the mind. We are told that the trend of both the individual and society is towards an advance from feeling to intelligence—from instinct to reason. Thinking is clear, hard, and courageous. In the field of religion, psychology and critical research have brought about a conflict in belief which has resulted in a break with authority and tradition, accompanied by the growing importance of the individual and his freedom to follow his own impulses. We are constantly reminded that phenomenal success in business has placed the emphasis upon the material things of life, has brought lack of faith, with indifference to the ethical, the spiritual, and the cultural. For the easy liver, life is free, superficial, and conscienceless; for the serious thinker, it is difficult and perplexing. Both alike feel the results of the rapid pace at which it is being lived. Restlessness, impatience, capriciousness, lack of restraint, the sense of freedom, are manifested on every side. It is an age of experimentation, emancipation, transition, revolution. The current of life has deepened; its rhythm has quickened. Machines assail and toughen the nerves. Lights are brighter. Noises are louder. The march of civilization has become a run.

¹ From *The Vassar Journal of Undergraduate Studies*. By permission of the Editor and the author.

That art is an expression of the thought and activity of the country in which it is produced at the period in which it is produced is a fact which is becoming more and more widely appreciated. Just as the quiet repose of the pyramid seems to express the ancient wisdom of the civilization that was Egypt—just as the calm and dignified beauty of the Parthenon expresses the height of perfection attained by civilization in Greece hundreds of years later—just as the wholly mysterious, aspiring Gothic cathedral typifies the Europe of the Middle Ages—so may the skyscraper be called the epitome of modern American life, the true expression of contemporary American civilization.

This does not mean that the commercial structure is the only building worthy of notice going up in America today. Far from it. The individual achievements of American architects have never before been so rich, so varied, and so promising in the various fields of architecture. In the building of country homes, college buildings, churches, and municipal institutions, a tradition of good building and tactful design is rapidly being established. And achievements in all of these fields show promise of a brilliant future. But architecture along these lines is still largely bound by eclecticism. For this reason it cannot be considered a typical architecture—a truly American product. The most typical American architecture today is that which has to do with commerce and industry. Although it uses a so-called modern style which had its birth in Europe, American architects, working in a civilization peculiarly suited to the experiment, have exploited and developed this modern style to the extent that they have produced an architecture which belongs, in every respect, to the civilization in which it appears. The skyscraper has grown up out of the standardized efficiency of that civilization—bearing the stamp of the machine age, and glorying in the triumph of the scientific technique of the age. It tells a tale of ruthlessness, of selfish exploitation, and of financial tyranny. Its chief excuse for being is efficiency—an efficiency resulting from speed and simplicity. Yet, at the same time, the skyscraper is as complex as is the assertively individual mind of the time, for all its courageous, honest thinking. It reflects the increasing power and intensity of modern life. It has caught the restless aspiration and overwhelming dissatisfaction of a civilization which, through its own highly perfected technique, is defeating its own ends. In other words, the skyscraper typifies contemporary American civilization.

In the first place, the skyscraper is a perfect form of expression for the material age in which we are living. Representing, as it does, the largest single industrial activity in the country, the building industry, even the skyscraper is subject to the encroachment of business enterprise. It fights a losing fight in a ruthless money-making scramble. Whether or not a building is well built, in the press of commercial enterprise it will inevitably be torn down and replaced by a bigger, as soon as it ceases to be economically efficient—as was the case with Burnham's excellently designed Illinois Trust and Savings Bank in Chicago. And, as the new skyscraper goes up, taller, better equipped, it becomes, in turn, the embodiment of that spirit in which it is built—a spirit of selfish exploitation, of financial tyranny by a capitalist-aristocracy. So we

cannot help feeling, as we gaze, for instance, at the Paramount Building in New York, with the smoke streaming from the illuminated glass globes on the top, that it is indeed a gigantic altar to some god—the only god to which all America bows down in reverence—the “almighty American dollar.”

The life of our big business is competition. The competition involved in the erecting of skyscrapers seems to become keener every day. Witness the amazing exhibition of the competitive spirit which has taken place in New York within the last two years. Somewhat over two years ago plans were published for the Chrysler Building which was to be 808 feet in height—that is, 16 feet higher than the Woolworth Building which had been the tallest in the country for many years. The Chrysler people's glory was short-lived however. About a month later the Bank of Manhattan announced that it was to build a structure 836 feet high. Chicago, Minneapolis, and Cleveland followed close on the heels of New York. Early in 1929, the Chicago Crane Tower was planned—to rise 880 feet. At this, the former governor of New York State, Alfred E. Smith, created a sensation in New York with the announcement of an Empire State Building to be erected on the site of the old Waldorf Astoria. It was to be an 80-story building, the highest in the world, approaching 1,000 feet—thus surpassing the record held for over a quarter of a century by the Eiffel Tower, Paris. Following this announcement came the proposed plans by the National City Bank for a 71-story building, 925 feet in Height, and by the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company for a building of 100 stories to be erected a block north of their once famous Tower. But the crux of the situation seemed to come when the representatives of the architects of the Chrysler Building and the Bank of Manhattan met one day by chance and fell into an argument. The Bank of Manhattan had been planned to rise 836 feet. The Chrysler representative declared he would beat that and did, by filing plans with the city for a 50-foot flag-pole to be structurally a part of the building. Whereupon the Bank of Manhattan revised their plans and set 925 feet for their aim.

Small wonder that America has been chided for holding as a national motto: “Bigger and Better than Ever.” But it is not only that, in the case of each new skyscraper which has gone up in the last ten years, its architect has striven to outdo the previous accomplishments of his fellows. It is more than that. The skyscraper itself, in its heightened dimensions, greater breadth, its increased facilities for housing so many hundreds of people (the new Empire State Building will be the working home of 25,000 people), its many scientific conveniences, surpasses every building that has ever been erected—or even dreamed of. A Beauvais is dwarfed beside it. The American people want quantity, and they are getting it.

This is an age which marks the supremacy of science. It is an age which is witnessing the triumph of the technical point of view. It is a machine age. The most fundamental principle of the new architecture seems to be to make of engineering an aesthetic activity. That sounds like an extreme statement, but, when we understand how the skyscraper is actually constructed, it appears

justified. The sudden impact of scientific and mechanical revolution has disrupted the old building methods. The plan of the modern building is derived automatically from the methods and materials employed. As the building takes on more and more the character of a machine so does its design, construction, and operation become subject to the same rules that govern, say, a locomotive.

The drills which prepare the way for the foundation of the skyscraper go 100 feet below the surface of the earth. The steel structure of which it is built makes its extreme height perfectly safe. The walls are only the encasing shell for the steel frame; they possess no structural function. In building the skyscraper, where natural factors are flouted or neglected, the engineer is always ready to provide a mechanical substitute which usually turns out to be more expensive than the original. Today, mechanical equipment and site make up more than half the total cost of the building. With fans, lights and radiators, windows are becoming less and less necessary in the modern skyscraper. The rooms of many of them are now being artificially lighted day in and day out—as well as being artificially ventilated. Thus, instead of the architect's having to pay attention to exposure, natural circulation, and direct daylight, he can center his attention on the maximum exploitation of land. As Lewis Mumford has said—and there is great truth in it: "A modern building is an establishment devoted to the manufacturing of light, the circulation of air, the manufacture of a uniform temperature, and the vertical transportation of its occupants." It is the elevator which is the principal factor in determining the height of the building today, for, when a building reaches more than 60 stories, the number of elevators necessary to transport the occupants of the upper stories cuts too big a slice out of the rentable area of the first few floors. As it is, even with the scientific development of elevator service, in a building such as the Equitable Building in New York it takes 59 elevators, one of which leaves the ground floor every 20 seconds, to feed the upper stories. So it seems that, for the present, 70 or 80 stories is the limit in building, for a higher structure, because of the elevator space and service requirements, becomes too costly to be practical. In the construction of the skyscraper, the engineers, civil, electrical, mechanical, sanitary, have vied with each other in perfecting the application of their sciences. In its exterior appearance, a multitude of cubical steppings make the transition from the block below to the vast tower, so that the modern building gives an effect of a slender pile of blocks, gradually diminishing as it pushes into the sky. Each new building, as it goes up—a skillfully arranged rectangular mass, rising block on block—bespeaks even more emphatically the triumph that the science of engineering is attaining.

Everything which makes for efficiency in our modern life is sought after. Efficiency is attained by speed and simplicity. We have only to notice the number of buildings which have gone up in the last ten years to realize that speed is an inherent characteristic in the skyscraper. It is only thirty years since Louis Sullivan, the Chicago architect, first conceived the idea of stretching a building up and not out. Today there are over 200 buildings of more than

20 stories in New York City alone. Whereas it took two centuries to build most of the great cathedrals of Europe, it takes less than two years for the erection of the modern skyscraper. In its building, everything which can possibly be machine-made is so made, because the cost of carrying the required capital inactive during the period of production is so heavy that every possible bit of speeding up is necessary. Once built, as a result of the further effect of the machine process on the internal economy, the modern building lends itself wholly to rapid production and quick turnover. Mechanical equipment, as we have seen, is highly perfected. There is also extreme simplicity and efficiency in the interior furnishings. Further efficiency is found in the skyscraper which houses a consolidation of different groups of a single industry, thus saving each time, energy, and cost of distribution. There is, for instance, the Garment Center in New York. Besides, the hotel or theatre which becomes an office building which, in turn, develops higher up into a loft for apartments is typical of the efficiency attained by the modern skyscraper. In every phase of its active life, the skyscraper is dedicated to efficiency.

The external appearance of the skyscraper conveys the same impression of efficiency. This result is attained by an extreme unification in design as a means of interest rather than complexity. The architect's chief concern being centered on the sculpturing of mass, surface and detail have faded into insignificance. There is a lack of ornament resulting in a monotony and almost a poverty of surface texture, instead of a diversity and richness, in order that the idea of the surface as the geometrical boundary of the volume may most clearly be stressed. The modernist knows that the straight line and unbroken surfaces of machine work can be as beautiful as the old craft, if they are inspired with imagination. Ornament is avoided not so much because it is worthless on account of machine repetition, but because, by breaking the surfaces, it stands in the way of the fullest unification. Take for example one of the best new skyscrapers, No. 333 North Michigan Avenue, in Chicago. The basic character of this modern work is measured simplicity, breadth, and clarity. The chief emphasis is upon form as it is expressed in values of volumes. This form is simple and well worked out, completely satisfying the demand for efficiency.

The break with religion and authority which is one of the outstanding features of contemporary life has resulted in a new attitude of mind, characterized by honesty and fearlessness. Since thirty years ago when the pioneer, Louis Sullivan, cut through the falsities of convention—the result of an architecture which deified charm, refinement, and style—to get at the aesthetics of building, the underlying aesthetic principles of modern architecture have undergone a vast change. Honesty of conception, truth to purpose, expressive shaping according to some emotional conception, form-seeking within the lines of function and material—these are the underlying principles of today's architecture. Honesty in creation and appreciation is the first key to the situation. Modern architecture tends toward building that is frankly expressive of purpose, material, and construction. So the skyscraper readily confesses that it is

a honeycomb tower of steel with a protecting encasement of stone, brick, or tiling, that its chief attribute is its efficiency, and that it is dedicated to the service of the great god, Mammon.

The extreme standardization to be found in modern architecture is in many ways representative of the same quality, which, largely as a direct result of the machine age, has found its way into the modern mind and the modern way of living. We all must have our car, must go to the same movies, must buy a living-room suite like the "Joneses." So the interior of the mechanized building follows a standard pattern. The decorators of the interior can put nothing like intelligence into their work. It is too mechanical. The floors of a modern building are of uniform height; windows of uniform spacing. This tendency toward standardization is especially clearly expressed in these skyscrapers which tend to use a great deal of glass, like the News Building in New York, or the new office building which is now going up at the corner of Forty-Second Street and Fifth Avenue. In looking up at these, one sees endless vertical lines of black windows set in narrow strips of white concrete, with not a variation except at the extreme base or the top.

While modern life is standardized, it is at the same time—and more typically—extremely diversified in its interests and consequently complex. This increasing complexity shows up only too clearly in the constant demand made upon the architects to build buildings in which all wants may be supplied under one roof. The modern apartment house, of course, has supplied a great many needs, but even more advanced is a building like the Carew Tower in Cincinnati. This building is located in the chief business section of the city and occupies an entire city block. It is 46 stories at its greatest height and includes a large office building, a 732-room hotel, two large department stores, a car-parking garage, and a number of specialty shops. This plan of unity in city blocks makes for a greater economy and a greater beauty. Undoubtedly it will be the next step in building. It bears the mark of an increasingly complex civilization.

Modern life, as we have seen, is becoming more intense as well as more complex. We are living at an increasing rate of speed which threatens to become, very soon, physically impossible. To keep up with it, art cannot remain quiet. It must intensify its values. For the machine's lack of personality in execution, there is greater intensity in form, design, color, and material. The rapid growth of skyscrapers in New York reveals heightened dimension, heightened contrast, and heightened energy—direct expression of a nervous, energetic age. Modern endeavor has seemed to concentrate on the development of expressive form, composing in values of volume instead of in three dimensions in values of mass. The New York Telephone Building is an excellent study of intensely expressive form. The architect-builders of today are catching the spirit of rising steel and concrete in buildings which glory in their height and their thousand windows, and which reflect, most of all, power and intensity.

Finally, the structure of the skyscraper itself expresses far better than

words the restlessness that is so closely linked with the speed which we feel in every phase of our modern life. This restlessness is largely the result of the break with authority. How well we know it! The restless wanting to be somewhere where one is not—the continual searching for true values—the craze for motion. One has merely to glance at the building to be infused with this spirit. The principle behind it is one of upward growth against a composition of rectangular masses. The effect of upward growth is achieved by the elimination of cornices and all other horizontal accents and insistence on the vertical elements. The effect of rectangular masses is produced by step-offs, or set-backs, which give a pyramidal effect to the building, allowing the greatest subtlety in the arrangement of masses and giving an impression like that of a long, slender box restlessly unfolding in a series of smaller boxes until it seems as though it must touch the roof of the sky. Typical of this expression of restlessness is the Mather Tower in Chicago which gives the impression of a huge rocket about to be released for a journey into space. There is a tremendous feeling of restless growth in the skyscraper. Each one, as it rises, towers majestically for only a short while before it is surpassed by another temple of Mammon that is larger, more skillfully constructed and more completely and scientifically equipped. There seems to be no end to the restless motion. Why should there be? In our civilization it is speed, not permanence, that counts.

Naturally enough, in this connection there is a vicious circle established, for, while the skyscraper is derived from the restlessness of the age, the skyscraper itself only serves to add to this restlessness. In considering the effect of the skyscraper upon the civilization of which it is a product, we inevitably turn to New York City, center of commerce, finance, and power—and, in a sense, the culmination of contemporary American civilization. There, in the man-made mountain that is down-town New York, is the living example of a civilization which is serving to defeat its own ends. Lewis Mumford made an extreme statement. "We have attempted to live off machinery and the host has devoured us." However, Mumford makes an important point. People dwell together in cities in order that they may pursue their life activities to the better advantage of all than would be the case if they were living widely separated from each other. When the congestion of a city reaches the point where these activities are hindered rather than assisted, it can be rightly said that the city has ceased to fulfill its purpose. This is rapidly becoming the case in New York. To use a specific example, the average building in the business section of lower Manhattan is 7.8 stories in height. As it is, 20 rapid-transit stations, through which trains pass as rapidly as it is safely possible, are needed to transport the occupants of these buildings. At the same time, there is nothing to prevent higher buildings going up in this area. In fact, this is just what is occurring. As to what the result in congestion would be if the plan for a 150-story building, housing 50,000 persons, which has been proposed by two down-town real estate operators, went into effect, it is hard to say. The alarming thing about the proposal is that such a building has been declared physically

possible by several competent engineers. In a building of this height pneumatic tubes would probably be used instead of elevators, to shoot people up through the building. But the prospect of a possible addition of 50,000 people to a city block in this already over-crowded area is overwhelming. Yet there is no law to prevent such an occurrence, which, at the rate at which the science of engineering is advancing today, is extremely possible. Manhattan has developed to the point where de-civilization is setting in. And, at this point, the right of the individual to do what he wills with his own should cease. The building of skyscrapers cannot be stopped, but their placement *can* be planned for. The first step in what appears to be an absolutely necessary safeguarding of the future of the city should be the establishment of a ratio to be strictly observed, between the capacity of buildings on the one hand and the capacity of streets and rapid-transit lines on the other.

In attempting to separate the skyscraper from the civilization of which it is so inevitably a part, for the purpose of evaluating it as a work of art, we find ourselves with a difficult task on our hands. It is almost impossible to rate the importance of either events or buildings so close to us. But a few truths about modern architecture, as exemplified in the skyscraper, seem to stand sharply out. In the first place, modernism is as changing as daily life and as inevitable. Timely revolution raises its head only when institutions of conservatism have outlived their usefulness. Modern architecture has necessarily been full of false starts, for modernism means experimentation and rapidly changing viewpoint. But the startlingly new cubic shapes of modernism are not necessarily lasting—they merely represent a distinct break with the past—a break which has its counterpart in every other department of modern life. These shapes symbolize a profound movement, not a passing architectural fancy. The modern movement in architecture has provided a basis for a new style. It has supplied (once again, the machine!) motive power and direction for the architecture of the future.

To make a decided statement, the moving of people aesthetically is not one of the primary aims of modern architecture. As Mumford says: "It is an architecture not for men but for angels and elevators." Granted that there are few sights in the world more lovely than the New York skyline from Brooklyn Bridge or the Jersey ferry, especially at dusk against a gold-clouded sky,—but to those on the street the skyscraper means merely a windowed wall, an entrance, and an elevator. Only during its construction or at night can even its sublimity be felt. So it seems that if buildings are to be experienced directly—if they are to make people see, feel, live,—the skyscraper defeats its own ends just as surely as the civilization around it. If the aim of architecture is to promote better living, the skyscraper fails. Unlike the ancient pyramid with its promise of a peaceful after-life—unlike the Parthenon, the expression in stone of the Greek ideal of living—unlike the Gothic cathedral with its constant inspiration towards a deeply spiritual life, the modern skyscraper offers nothing of moral value to contemporary life. However, if art is divorced from morals, if the aim of art is not aesthetic expression but the perfect expression

of an idea, the skyscraper must be called art. It expresses, fully as effectively as the pyramid, the Greek temple, the Gothic cathedral before it, the spirit of a civilization. It may be a civilization that is warped, machine-crazed, money-mad, that is traveling at a pace which, in time, it must drop for mere lack of physical endurance (or perhaps that is where the Robot comes in!). Yet, whatever the world of the future, today's civilization has found its ultimate expression—just as civilizations from the beginning of time have expressed themselves in their architecture—in the skyscraper.

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PARAGRAPHS FOR ANALYSIS

1. The owners or managers of hundreds of other buildings, hotels, and industrial concerns have adopted the same procedure. 2. The last few years have also shown a steady increase in the number of smaller municipalities that have cut loose from the domination of the power interests and erected their own power plant. 3. Most of these installations have resulted in impressive reductions in the cost of current for the municipality, and in some instances profits from sold current have been so large as entirely to eliminate the necessity of local taxes. 4. The list of municipalities that have taken this step is long and is steadily growing. 5. Among those that have been able through operation of their own power plants to eliminate all local taxes are South River, New Jersey, with a population of 6,600; Spooner, Wisconsin, with 2,300; Chanute, Kansas, with 9,000; Pawhuska, Oklahoma, with 6,500; Ponca City, Oklahoma, with 16,000.¹

1. A peculiarly grotesque blunder, of frequent occurrence in newspaper offices, is due to the structure of the linotype keyboard. 2. The two rows of keys leading from top to bottom, at the extreme left, are "etaoin" and "shrdlu." 3. An operator who finds he has made a mistake runs his left hand down these two rows until he has filled the line, casts it as a "pi line," to clear the machine, and proceeds to reset the line correctly. 4. The make-up man or proof-reader is supposed later to delete the pi line, but he frequently fails to do so. 5. The results are sometimes amusing. 6. In one news story, the witness of a drowning "shouted, 'etaoin, shrdlu, shrdlu.'" 7. In another a judge was made to sentence a prisoner "to etaoin etaoin shrdlu shrdlu for ten years"—a clear violation of the constitutional provision against cruel and unusual punishments.²

1. As for Europe and its hot spot of politics in Germany, no observer here can view with anything but dismay the spectacle of the easily gained confidence of youth, enlisted, inspired, intoxicated by the most skilful propagandists of our time for the re-creation of a great people by ideals which we had thought safely dead and buried. 2. The situation is really worse than this, for if the Hitler ideals were all bad, if he were merely a Prussian tyrant, escape would come with his first defeat. 3. But unhappily the Nazi philosophy, in so far as it has been exposed, is a melange of socialism, Italian fascism, communist conceptions of education and a minority dictatorship, military autocracy, and the modern Machiavellianism of bunk—and all this the youth of Germany, and many of the youths of Austria, Switzerland, Holland, and elsewhere, have swallowed in a gulp, like the ideas in a lecture course by a popular professor.³

¹ From *The Nation*, Jan. 3, 1934.

² From *Magazine Making*. Copyright 1931 by John Bakeless. Published by The Viking Press.

³ From editorial by Henry Seidel Canby, *The Saturday Review of Literature*.

1. The nobility had their joyous entries, when they rode through the streets in gold-shot silks, a-glitter with jewels, but the humble weaver or dyer had his chance to parade, too, especially on the great saints' days and above all on *Fête-Dieu*, when, with his guild, he could make almost as brave a showing as royalty itself. 2. First came two torch-bearers in colorful cloaks of office, each carrying an elaborately carved and gilded chandelier on the end of a long pole, with a huge wax candle alight. 3. Then came the banner of rich stuff, painted or embroidered with the figure of the patron saint and the emblems of the craft, heavy with gold fringes, the staff likewise painted and gilded and the bearer in his special ceremonial costume. 4. Probably a carved and painted wooden figure of the patron saint would be carried under an ornate canopy next, and perhaps a sculptural group showing a master at work at the trade. 5. Then followed the members, all in their very best clothes, and at the end were the officers in silk and velvet robes embroidered with the guild arms. 6. At intervals were corps of musicians with silver trumpets, flutes, and drums. 7. After the corporations of artisans came the societies of archers and arquebus shooters, mounted or afoot, and the monastic orders and ranks of notable citizens sumptuously dressed. 8. In an Antwerp procession of the early sixteenth century one conspicuous group consisted of widows, all dressed in white from head to foot. 9. The ecclesiastics were in their richest gold-embroidered vestments, escorting a statue of the Virgin under a splendid canopy. 10. At the end were chariots and floats carrying *tableaux vivants*, showing the Annunciation, the Adoration of the Magi, and other sacred episodes, while at the very end Saint Marguerite led a dragon, followed by Saint George and other cavaliers. 11. Any man, whatever the drudgery of his days, in such a company must have felt his spirit lift.¹

1. Some persons, it is said, still cherish the pleasant illusion that to write a history of thought is not, on the face of it, a chimerical undertaking. 2. Their opinion implies the assumption that all contemporary thought has certain common characteristics, and that various prophets, inspired by the spirit of this or any other age, utter complementary rather than contradictory doctrines. 3. Could we attain the vantage ground which will be occupied by our posterity, we might, of course, detect an underlying unity of purpose in the perplexing labyrinth of divergent intellectual parts. 4. And yet, making all allowance for the intellectual distortions due to mental perspective when the objects of vision are too close to our eyes, it is difficult to see how two of the most conspicuous teachers of modern Englishmen are to be forced into neighboring compartments of the same logical framework. 5. Newman and J. S. Mill were nearly contemporaries; they were probably the two greatest masters of philosophical English in recent times, and the mind of the same generation will bear the impress of their speculation. 6. And yet they move in spheres of thought so different that a critic, judging from internal evidence, might be inclined to assign them to entirely different periods. 7. The distance

¹ From Phyllis Ackerman, *Tapestry, the Mirror of Civilization*.

from Oxford to Westminster would seem to be measurable rather in centuries than in miles. 8. Oxford, as Newman says, was in his time a "mediaeval university." 9. The roar of modern controversies was heard dimly, as in a dream. 10. Only vague rumors of portentous phantoms of German or English origin—Pantheism and neologies and rationalism—might occasionally reach the quiet cloisters where Aristotelian logic still reigned supreme. 11. To turn from Newman's "Apologia" to Mill's "Autobiography" is, in the slang of modern science, to plunge the organism in a totally different environment. 12. With Newman we are knee-deep in the dust of the ancient fathers, poring over the histories of Eutychians, Monophysites, or Arians, comparing the teaching of Luther and Melancthon with that of Augustine; and from such dry bones extracting—not the materials of antiquarian discussions or philosophical histories—but living and effective light for our own guidance. 13. The terminal limit of our inquiries is fixed by Butler's "Analogy." 14. Newman ends where Mill began. 15. It was precisely the study of Butler's book which was the turning-point in the mental development of the elder Mill, and the cause of his son's education in entire ignorance of all that is generally called religion. 16. The foundation-stone of Mill's creed is to Newman the great rock of offence; the atmosphere habitually breathed by the free-thinker was to the theologian as a mephitic vapor in which all that is pure and holy mentally droops and dies. 17. But, for the most part, Newman would rather ignore than directly encounter this insidious evil. 18. He will not reason with such, but pass them by with an averted glance. 19. "Why," he asks, "should we vex ourselves to find out whether our own deductions are philosophical or no, provided they are religious?"¹

1. Now before I begin to speak of the actual history of this important art of weaving, I will run through the various forms of which it is comprised. 2. But first of all it may be necessary to explain three words which I shall be compelled to use: warp, weft, and web; because I have noticed that the writers of leading articles and poetry are sometimes a little vague about the way they use these words. 3. Well, the warp is the set of strained threads, sometimes vertical, sometimes horizontal, on which the work is founded; the weft is the thread which is wafted in and out across this warp; and the woof or web is the product of the two.²

1. Imagine a great factory where little or no work is done: buildings that cover acres, miles on miles of corridors, rooms after rooms, machines of a hundred different kinds. 2. Every known scientific device, every known scientific principle in usable form is embodied in one room or another; equipment more perfect than anything ever before dreamed of. 3. But that whole great plant, with all its possibilities, all its intricate mechanism, is standing idle, not abandoned, but not kept up. 4. Only the footfalls of watchmen

¹ From Leslie Stephen, *Newman's Theory of Belief*.

² From William Morris, *Lectures on Art and Industry*.

echo along the empty corridors; cobwebs are across the windows, around the door-knobs, between the spokes of the great flywheels, and thick dust over everything. 5. The delicately adjusted machinery is motionless, rusting silently away; the whole wonderful plant, with all its marvelous equipment, practically going to waste. 6. What is it? 7. That's a leading psychologist's picture of the average human mind.¹

1. Life would undoubtedly be a simpler affair if in truth our ills could be treated so easily. 2. If every young woman who found herself without dancing partners could wash with a new kind of soap and turn into a Mae West overnight; if the man who is not succeeding in business could just take a pill and be made vice-president of the company forthwith; if a certain brand of tobacco really kept one from losing one's temper; if white teeth really solved domestic ills; if a light over the kitchen sink made Mother permanently happy—the revolution would be indefinitely postponed and the good old capitalist system could sit back in its chair and draw a long breath of relief. 3. For if one nostrum did not cure us, there would be a number of others that we could easily try. 4. Among them all we must surely find the way to health, wealth, and happiness. 5. Indeed, one suspects that the American people are busy right now in making the rounds from soap to pills and from pills to washing powders to find the end of the rainbow. 6. Otherwise, our advertisers, being hard-headed gentlemen who probably do not take their own prescriptions, would not spend good money on this form of "pep talk." 7. It must pay. 8. Possibly what they are doing in the large is catering to the universal capacity for self-deception, for unwillingness to face the bitter truth. 9. For Mary Ann knows well enough why she is a wallflower, but she won't admit it. 10. And poor Brown is perfectly aware of his own shortcomings in the head which make his promotion impossible. 11. But both of them read a highly colored story about some other Mary or Brown who was relieved of his God-given deficiencies of beauty or brains by a magic potion. 12. Others have found a Fairy Godmother. 13. Why should not we all? 14. This is the secret of our advertisers' success. 15. Why worry? 16. Take a pill and everything will be all right in the morning.²

1. In our day it is generously conceded that the Puritans made admirable ancestors. 2. We pay them this handsome compliment in after-dinner speeches at all commemorative meetings. 3. Just what they would have thought of their descendants is an unprofitable speculation. 4. Three hundred years divide us from those stern enthusiasts, who, coveting lofty things, found no price too high to pay for them. 5. "It is not with us as with men whom small matters can discourage, or small discontentments cause to wish themselves at home again," wrote William Brewster, when one half of the Mayflower pilgrims had died in the first terrible year, and no gleam of hope

¹ Editorial from *Collier's*, the *National Weekly*.

² From "In the Driftway," *The Nation*, Jan. 3, 1934.

shone on the survivors. 6. To perish of hunger and cold is not what we should now call a "small discontentment." 7. To most of us it would seem a good and sufficient reason for abandoning any enterprise whatsoever.¹

1. However Truth may regard this caustic estimate of the mid-Victorian aesthetic revival, she will at least demand that William Morris be singled out of the group on account of certain distinguishing traits. 2. For one thing, he was a robust, masculine personality. 3. For art divorced from life, for art as one of the emotional dissipations of an over-leisured class, for art sipped like a liqueur, he had only a strong contempt. 4. Of Swinburne he said, "He derives too much from Literature, too little from Life;" and he could be eloquently scornful of the affectations of Wilde. 5. Speaking of those who gush about art, he would say: "What's the use of making a damned fuss about it? One likes a picture because it's jolly well done, and there's an end to it." 6. If on the one hand his literary tastes led him into the enchanted forests and fortunate isles of mediæval and classic romance, on the other he had an immense relish for the rough adventure and boisterous humor of Dickens, Mark Twain, and *Uncle Remus*. 7. Strongly characteristic of the man, too, was his coldness toward the art of Southern Europe as contrasted with his passion for the art of the North. 8. The gray, bleak masses of Amiens cathedral, the ungainly features of Van Eyck's portraits were to him lovelier than the splendor of Italian palaces and the graces of Angelico and Botticelli. 9. The Icelandic sagas set the blood rushing in his veins, and outside the placid meadows of his own home on the upper reaches of the Thames, there was no dearer spot on earth than the grim fjords and nesses and dismal moors of that island on which the Arctic ocean breaks. 10. Like the heroes of the North he would have his berserk furies, when he would crumple the tines of a fork with his teeth, kick out the panels of a door, or hurl a book with all his might at some offending noddle. 11. A friend said of him, "With a broad-edged battle-axe in his hand, standing up in a Viking galley, he would have looked just in his place." 12. The man we have to deal with, then, was no dilettante, no sybarite, least of all "the idle singer of an empty day."²

1. Although banana cargoes are carried at a much higher temperature than meat, the refrigerating machinery used is much more powerful. 2. The reason is that meat is already chilled when loaded, while bananas are not only warm when put aboard ship, but also generate heat in considerable volume. 3. At the beginning of the voyage the temperature of the banana cargo is highest, and the generation of heat decreases as cooling progresses. 4. In the early stages of cooling, the amount of heat given off by the average cargo of bananas is about 8,000,000 British thermal units per hour.³

¹ From Agnes Repplier.

² From Roger Montgomery, *William Morris*.

³ From Philip Keep Reynolds, *The Banana*.

SHORT STORIES

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THE CASK OF AMONTILLADO

by Edgar Allan Poe

THE thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as I best could, but when he ventured upon insult I vowed revenge. You, who so well know the nature of my soul, will not suppose, however, that I gave utterance to a threat. *At length* I would be avenged; this was a point definitely settled—but the very definitiveness with which it was resolved precluded the idea of risk. I must not only punish but punish with impunity. A wrong is unredressed when retribution overtakes its redresser. It is equally unredressed when the avenger fails to make himself felt as such to him who has done the wrong.

It must be understood that neither by word nor deed had I given Fortunato cause to doubt my good will. I continued, as was my wont, to smile in his face, and he did not perceive that my smile *now* was at the thought of his immolation.

He had a weak point—this Fortunato—although in other regards he was a man to be respected and even feared. He prided himself on his connoisseurship in wine. Few Italians have the true virtuoso spirit. For the most part their enthusiasm is adopted to suit the time and opportunity, to practise imposture upon the British and Austrian *millionaires*. In painting and gemmery, Fortunato, like his countrymen, was a quack, but in the matter of old wines he was sincere. In this respect I did not differ from him materially;—I was skilful in the Italian vintages myself, and bought largely whenever I could.

It was about dusk, one evening during the supreme madness of the carnival season, that I encountered my friend. He accosted me with excessive warmth, for he had been drinking much. The man wore motley. He had on a tight-fitting parti-striped dress, and his head was surmounted by the conical cap and bells. I was so pleased to see him that I thought I should never have done wringing his hand.

I said to him—"My dear Fortunato, you are luckily met. How remarkably well you are looking to-day. But I have received a pipe of what passes for Amontillado, and I have my doubts."

"How?" said he. "Amontillado? A pipe? Impossible! And in the middle of the carnival!"

"I have my doubts," I replied; "and I was silly enough to pay the full Amontillado price without consulting you in the matter. You were not to be found, and I was fearful of losing a bargain."

"Amontillado!"

"I have my doubts."

"Amontillado!"

"And I must satisfy them."

"Amontillado!"

"As you are engaged, I am on my way to Luchesi. If any one has a critical turn it is he. He will tell me—"

"Luchesi cannot tell Amontillado from Sherry."

"And yet some fools will have it that his taste is a match for your own."

"Come, let us go."

"Whither?"

"To your vaults."

"My friend, no; I will not impose upon your good nature. I perceive you have an engagement. Luchesi—"

"I have no engagement;—come."

"My friend, no. It is not the engagement, but the severe cold with which I perceive you are afflicted. The vaults are insufferably damp. They are encrusted with nitre."

"Let us go, nevertheless. The cold is merely nothing. Amontillado! You have been imposed upon. And as for Luchesi, he cannot distinguish Sherry from Amontillado."

Thus speaking, Fortunato possessed himself of my arm; and putting on a mask of black silk and drawing a *roquelaure* closely about my person, I suffered him to hurry me to my palazzo.

There were no attendants at home; they had absconded to make merry in honour of the time. I had told them that I should not return until the morning, and had given them explicit orders not to stir from the house. These orders were sufficient, I well knew, to insure their immediate disappearance, one and all, as soon as my back was turned.

I took from their sconces two flambeaux, and giving one to Fortunato, bowed him through several suites of rooms to the archway that led into the vaults. I passed down a long and winding staircase, requesting him to be cautious as he followed. We came at length to the foot of the descent, and stood together upon the damp ground of the catacombs of the Montresors.

The gait of my friend was unsteady, and the bells upon his cap jingled as he strode.

"The pipe," he said.

"It is farther on," said I; "but observe the white web-work which gleams from these cavern walls."

He turned towards me, and looked into my eyes with two filmy orbs that distilled the rheum of intoxication.

"Nitre?" he asked, at length.

"Nitre," I replied. "How long have you had that cough?"

"Ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!—ugh! ugh! ugh!"

My poor friend found it impossible to reply for many minutes.

"It is nothing," he said, at last.

"Come," I said, with decision, "we will go back; your health is precious. You are rich, respected, admired, beloved; you are happy, as once I was. You are a man to be missed. For me it is no matter. We will go back; you will be ill, and I cannot be responsible. Besides, there is Luchesi—"

"Enough," he said; "the cough is a mere nothing; it will not kill me. I shall not die of a cough."

"True—true," I replied; "and, indeed, I had no intention of alarming you unnecessarily—but you should use all proper caution. A draught of this Medoc will defend us from the damps."

Here I knocked off the neck of a bottle which I drew from a long row of its fellows that lay upon the mould.

"Drink," I said, presenting him the wine.

He raised it to his lips with a leer. He paused and nodded to me familiarly, while his bells jingled.

"I drink," he said, "to the buried that repose around us."

"And I to your long life."

He again took my arm, and we proceeded.

"These vaults," he said, "are extensive."

"The Montresors," I replied, "were a great and numerous family."

"I forget your arms."

"A huge human foot d'or, in a field azure; the foot crushes a serpent rampant whose fangs are imbedded in the heel."

"And the motto?"

"*Nemo me impune lacessit.*"

"Good!" he said.

The wine sparkled in his eyes and the bells jingled. My own fancy grew warm with the Medoc. We had passed through long walls of piled skeletons, with casks and puncheons intermingling, into the inmost recesses of the catacombs. I paused again, and this time I made bold to seize Fortunato by an arm above the elbow.

"The nitre!" I said; "see, it increases. It hangs like moss upon the vaults. We are below the river's bed. The drops of moisture trickle among the bones. Come, we will go back ere it is too late. Your cough—"

"It is nothing," he said; "let us go on. But first, another draught of the Medoc."

I broke and reached him a flagon of De Grève. He emptied it at a breath. His eyes flashed with a fierce light. He laughed and threw the bottle upwards with a gesticulation I did not understand.

I looked at him in surprise. He repeated the movement—a grotesque one.

"You do not comprehend?" he said.

"Not I," I replied.

"Then you are not of the brotherhood."

"How?"

"You are not of the masons."

"Yes, yes," I said; "yes, yes."

"You? Impossible! A mason?"

"A mason," I replied.

"A sign," he said, "a sign."

"It is this," I answered, producing from beneath the folds of my *roquelaure* a trowel.

"You jest," he exclaimed, recoiling a few paces. "But let us proceed to the Amontillado."

"Be it so," I said, replacing the tool beneath the cloak and again offering my arm. He leaned upon it heavily. We continued our route in search of the Amontillado. We passed through a range of low arches, descended, passed on, and descending again, arrived at a deep crypt, in which the foulness of the air caused our flambeaux rather to glow than flame.

At the most remote end of the crypt there appeared another less spacious. Its walls had been lined with human remains, piled to the vault overhead, in the fashion of the great catacombs of Paris. Three sides of this interior crypt were still ornamented in this manner. From the fourth side the bones had been thrown down, and lay promiscuously upon the earth, forming at one point a mound of some size. Within the wall thus exposed by the displacing of the bones, we perceived a still interior crypt or recess, in depth about four feet, in width three, in height six or seven. It seemed to have been constructed for no especial use within itself, but formed merely the interval between two of the colossal supports of the roof of the catacombs, and was backed by one of their circumscribing walls of solid granite.

It was in vain that Fortunato, uplifting his dull torch, endeavoured to pry into the depth of the recess. Its termination the feeble light did not enable us to see.

"Proceed," I said; "herein is the Amontillado. As for Luchesi—"

"He is an ignoramus," interrupted my friend, as he stepped unsteadily forward, while I followed immediately at his heels. In an instant he had reached the extremity of the niche, and finding his progress arrested by the rock, stood stupidly bewildered. A moment more and I had fettered him to the granite. In its surface were two iron staples, distant from each other about two feet, horizontally. From one of these depended a short chain, from the other a padlock. Throwing the links about his waist, it was but the work of a few seconds to secure it. He was too much astounded to resist. Withdrawing the key I stepped back from the recess.

"Pass your hand," I said, "over the wall; you cannot help feeling the nitre. Indeed, it is *very* damp. Once more let me *implore* you to return. No? Then I must positively leave you. But I must first render you all the little attentions in my power."

"The Amontillado!" ejaculated my friend, not yet recovered from his astonishment.

"True," I replied; "the Amontillado."

As I said these words I busied myself among the pile of bones of which I have before spoken. Throwing them aside, I soon uncovered a quantity of

building stone and mortar. With these materials and with the aid of my trowel, I began vigorously to wall up the entrance of the niche.

I had scarcely laid the first tier of the masonry when I discovered that the intoxication of Fortunato had in a great measure worn off. The earliest indication I had of this was a low moaning cry from the depth of the recess. It was *not* the cry of a drunken man. There was then a long and obstinate silence. I laid the second tier, and the third, and the fourth; and then I heard the furious vibrations of the chain. The noise lasted for several minutes, during which, that I might hearken to it with the more satisfaction, I ceased my labours and sat down upon the bones. When at last the clanking subsided, I resumed the trowel, and finished without interruption the fifth, the sixth, and the seventh tier. The wall was now nearly upon a level with my breast. I again paused, and holding the flambeaux over the mason-work, threw a few feeble rays upon the figure within.

A succession of loud and shrill screams, bursting suddenly from the throat of the chained form, seemed to thrust me violently back. For a brief moment I hesitated, I trembled. Unsheathing my rapier, I began to grope with it about the recess; but the thought of an instant reassured me. I placed my hand upon the solid fabric of the catacombs, and felt satisfied. I reapproached the wall; I replied to the yells of him who clamoured. I re-echoed, I aided, I surpassed them in volume and in strength. I did this, and the clamourer grew still.

It was now midnight, and my task was drawing to a close. I had completed the eighth, the ninth and the tenth tier. I had finished a portion of the last and the eleventh; there remained but a single stone to be fitted and plastered in. I struggled with its weight; I placed it partially in its destined position. But now there came from out the niche a low laugh that erected the hairs upon my head. It was succeeded by a sad voice, which I had difficulty in recognizing as that of the noble Fortunato. The voice said—

“Ha! ha! ha!—he! he! he!—a very good joke, indeed—an excellent jest. We shall have many a rich laugh about it at the palazzo—he! he! he!—over our wine—he! he! he!”

“The Amontillado!” I said.

“He! he! he!—he! he! he!—yes, the Amontillado. But is it not getting late? Will not they be awaiting us at the palazzo, the Lady Fortunato and the rest? Let us be gone.”

“Yes,” I said, “let us be gone.”

“*For the love of God, Montresor!*”

“Yes,” I said, “for the love of God!”

But to these words I hearkened in vain for a reply. I grew impatient. I called aloud—

“Fortunato!”

No answer. I called again—

“Fortunato!”

No answer still. I thrust a torch through the remaining aperture and let it fall within. There came forth in return only a jingling of the bells. My

heart grew sick; it was the dampness of the catacombs that made it so. I hastened to make an end of my labour. I forced the last stone into its position; I plastered it up. Against the new masonry I re-erected the old rampart of bones. For the half of a century no mortal has disturbed them. *In pace requiescat!*

YOUNG GOODMAN BROWN¹

by Nathaniel Hawthorne

YOUNG Goodman Brown came forth at sunset into the street of Salem village; but put his head back, after crossing the threshold, to exchange a parting kiss with his young wife. And Faith, as the wife was aptly named, thrust her own pretty head into the street, letting the wind play with the pink ribbons of her cap while she called to Goodman Brown.

'Dearest heart,' whispered she, softly and rather sadly, when her lips were close to his ear, 'prithee put off your journey until sunrise and sleep in your own bed to-night. A lone woman is troubled with such dreams and such thoughts that she's afeared of herself sometimes. Pray tarry with me this night, dear husband, of all nights in the year.'

'My love and my Faith,' replied young Goodman Brown, 'of all nights in the year, this one night must I tarry away from thee. My journey, as thou callest it, forth and back again, must needs be done 'twixt now and sunrise. What, my sweet, pretty wife, dost thou doubt me already, and we but three months married?'

'Then God bless you!' said Faith, with the pink ribbons; 'and may you find all well when you come back.'

'Amen!' cried Goodman Brown. 'Say thy prayers, dear Faith, and go to bed at dusk, and no harm will come to thee.'

So they parted; and the young man pursued his way until, being about to turn the corner by the meeting-house, he looked back and saw the head of Faith still peeping after him with a melancholy air, in spite of her pink ribbons.

'Poor little Faith!' thought he, for his heart smote him. 'What a wretch am I to leave her on such an errand! She talks of dreams, too. Methought as she spoke, there was trouble in her face, as if a dream had warned her what work is to be done to-night. But no, no; 'twould kill her to think it. Well, she's a blessed angel on earth; and after this one night I'll cling to her skirts and follow her to heaven.'

With this excellent resolve for the future, Goodman Brown felt himself justified in making more haste on his present evil purpose. He had taken a dreary road, darkened by all the gloomiest trees of the forest, which barely

¹ From *Mosses from an Old Manse*.

stood aside to let the narrow path creep through, and closed immediately behind. It was all as lonely as could be; and there is this peculiarity in such a solitude, that the traveller knows not who may be concealed by the innumerable trunks and the thick boughs overhead; so that with lonely footsteps he may yet be passing through an unseen multitude.

'There may be a devilish Indian behind every tree,' said Goodman Brown to himself; and he glanced fearfully behind him as he added, 'What if the Devil himself should be at my very elbow!'

His head being turned back, he passed a crook of the road, and, looking forward again, beheld the figure of a man, in grave and decent attire, seated at the foot of an old tree. He arose at Goodman Brown's approach and walked onward side by side with him.

'You are late, Goodman Brown,' said he. 'The clock of the Old South was striking as I came through Boston; and that is full fifteen minutes ago.'

'Faith kept me back awhile,' replied the young man, with a tremor in his voice, caused by the sudden appearance of his companion, though not wholly unexpected.

It was now deep dusk in the forest, and deepest in that part of it where these two were journeying. As nearly as could be discerned, the second traveller was about fifty years old, apparently in the same rank of life as Goodman Brown, and bearing a considerable resemblance to him, though perhaps more in expression than features. Still they might have been taken for father and son. And yet, though the elder person was as simply clad as the younger and as simple in manner too, he had an indescribable air of one who knew the world, and who would not have felt abashed at the governor's dinner-table or in King William's court, were it possible that his affairs should call him thither. But the only thing about him that could be fixed upon as remarkable was his staff, which bore the likeness of a great black snake, so curiously wrought that it might almost be seen to twist and wriggle itself like a living serpent. This, of course, must have been an ocular deception, assisted by the uncertain light.

'Come, Goodman Brown,' cried his fellow-traveller, 'this is a dull pace for the beginning of a journey. Take my staff, if you are so soon weary.'

'Friend,' said the other, exchanging his slow pace for a full stop, 'having kept covenant by meeting thee here, it is my purpose now to return whence I came. I have scruples touching the matter thou wot'st of.'

'Sayest thou so?' replied he of the serpent, smiling apart. 'Let us walk on, nevertheless, reasoning as we go; and if I convince thee not, thou shalt turn back. We are but a little way in the forest yet.'

'Too far! too far!' exclaimed the goodman, unconsciously resuming his walk. 'My father never went into the woods on such an errand, nor his father before him. We have been a race of honest men and good Christians since the days of the martyrs; and shall I be the first by the name of Brown that ever took this path and kept—'

'Such company, thou wouldst say,' observed the elder person, interpreting

his pause. 'Well said, Goodman Brown! I have been as well acquainted with your family as with ever a one among the Puritans; and that's no trifle to say. I helped your grandfather, the constable, when he lashed the Quaker woman so smartly through the streets of Salem; and it was I that brought your father a pitch-pine knot, kindled at my own hearth, to set fire to an Indian village, in King Philip's war. They were my good friends both; and many a pleasant walk have we had along this path, and returned merrily after midnight. I would fain be friends with you for their sake.'

'If it be as thou sayest,' replied Goodman Brown, 'I marvel they never spoke of these matters; or, verily, I marvel not, seeing that the least rumour of the sort would have driven them from New England. We are a people of prayer, and good works to boot, and abide no such wickedness.'

'Wickedness or not,' said the traveller with the twisted staff, 'I have a very general acquaintance here in New England. The deacons of many a church have drunk the communion wine with me; the selectmen of divers towns make me their charman; and a majority of the Great and General Court are firm supporters of my interest. The governor and I, too—But these are state secrets.'

'Can this be so?' cried Goodman Brown, with a stare of amazement at his undisturbed companion. 'Howbeit, I have nothing to do with the governor and council; they have their own ways, and are no rule for a simple husbandman like me. But, were I to go on with thee, how should I meet the eye of that good old man, our minister, at Salem village? Oh, his voice would make me tremble both Sabbath day and lecture day!'

Thus far the elder traveller had listened with due gravity; but now burst into a fit of irrepressible mirth, shaking himself so violently that his snake-like staff actually seemed to wriggle in sympathy.

'Ha! ha! ha!' shouted he again and again; then composing himself, 'Well, go on, Goodman Brown, go on; but, prithee, don't kill me with laughing.'

'Well, then, to end the matter at once,' said Goodman Brown, considerably nettled, 'there is my wife, Faith. It would break her dear little heart; and I'd rather break my own.'

'Nay, if that be the case,' answered the other, 'e'en go thy ways, Goodman Brown. I would not for twenty old women like the one hobbling before us that Faith should come to any harm.'

As he spoke, he pointed his staff at a female figure on the path, in whom Goodman Brown recognized a very pious and exemplary dame, who had taught him his catechism in youth, and was still his moral and spiritual adviser, jointly with the minister and Deacon Gookin.

'A marvel, truly, that Goody Cloyse should be so far in the wilderness at nightfall,' said he. 'But, with your leave, friend, I shall take a cut through the woods until we have left this Christian woman behind. Being a stranger to you, she might ask whom I was consorting with and whither I was going.'

'Be it so,' said his fellow-traveller. 'Betake you to the woods, and let me keep the path.'

Accordingly the young man turned aside, but took care to watch his companion, who advanced softly along the road until he had come within a staff's length of the old dame. She, meanwhile, was making the best of her way, with singular speed for so aged a woman, and mumbling some indistinct words—a prayer, doubtless—as she went. The traveller put forth his staff and touched her withered neck with what seemed the serpent's tail.

'The Devil!' screamed the pious old lady.

'Then Goody Cloyse knows her old friend?' observed the traveller, confronting her and leaning on his writhing stick.

'Ah, forsooth, and is it your worship indeed?' cried the good dame. 'Yea, truly is it, and in the very image of my old gossip, Goodman Brown, the grandfather of the silly fellow that now is. But—would your worship believe it?—my broomstick hath strangely disappeared, stolen, as I suspect, by that unhanged witch, Goody Cory, and that, too, when I was all anointed with the juice of smallage, and cinquefoil, and wolf's-bane—'

'Mingled with fine wheat and the fat of a new-born babe,' said the shape of old Goodman Brown.

'Ah, your worship knows the recipe,' cried the old lady, cackling aloud. 'So, as I was saying, being all ready for the meeting, and no horse to ride on, I made up my mind to foot it; for they tell me there is a nice young man to be taken into communion to-night. But now your good worship will lend me your arm, and we shall be there in a twinkling.'

'That can hardly be,' answered her friend. 'I may not spare you my arm, Goody Cloyse; but here is my staff, if you will.'

So saying, he threw it down at her feet, where, perhaps, it assumed life, being one of the rods which its owner had formerly lent to the Egyptian magi. Of this fact, however, Goodman Brown could not take cognizance. He had cast up his eyes in astonishment, and, looking down again, beheld neither Goody Cloyse nor the serpentine staff, but his fellow-traveller alone, who waited for him as calmly as if nothing had happened.

'That old woman taught me my catechism,' said the young man; and there was a world of meaning in this simple comment.

They continued to walk onward, while the elder traveller exhorted his companion to make good speed and persevere in the path, discoursing so aptly that his arguments seemed rather to spring up in the bosom of his auditor than to be suggested by himself. As they went, he plucked a branch of maple to serve for a walking-stick, and began to strip it of the twigs and little boughs, which were wet with evening dew. The moment his fingers touched them they became strangely withered and dried up as with a week's sunshine. Thus the pair proceeded, at a good free pace, until suddenly, in a gloomy hollow of the road, Goodman Brown sat himself down on the stump of a tree and refused to go any farther.

'Friend,' said he, stubbornly, 'my mind is made up. Not another step will I budge on this errand. What if a wretched old woman do choose to go to

the Devil when I thought she was going to heaven: is that any reason why I should quit my dear Faith and go after her?’

‘You will think better of this by and by,’ said his acquaintance, composedly. ‘Sit here and rest yourself awhile; and when you feel like moving again, there is my staff to help you along.’

Without more words, he threw his companion the maplestick, and was as speedily out of sight as if he had vanished into the deepening gloom. The young man sat a few moments by the roadside, applauding himself greatly, and thinking with how clear a conscience he should meet the minister in his morning walk, nor shrink from the eye of good old Deacon Gookin. And what calm sleep would be his that very night, which was to have been spent so wickedly, but so purely and sweetly now, in the arms of Faith! Amidst these pleasant and praiseworthy meditations, Goodman Brown heard the tramp of horses along the road, and deemed it advisable to conceal himself within the verge of the forest, conscious of the guilty purpose that had brought him thither, though now so happily turned from it.

On came the hoof-tramps and the voices of the riders, two grave old voices, conversing soberly as they drew near. These mingled sounds appeared to pass along the road, within a few yards of the young man’s hiding-place; but, owing doubtless to the depth of the gloom at that particular spot, neither the travellers nor their steeds were visible. Though their figures brushed the small boughs by the wayside, it could not be seen that they intercepted, even for a moment, the faint gleam from the strip of bright sky athwart which they must have passed. Goodman Brown alternately crouched and stood on tiptoe, pulling aside the branches and thrusting forth his head as far as he durst, without discerning so much as a shadow. It vexed him the more, because he could have sworn, were such a thing possible, that he recognized the voices of the minister and Deacon Gookin, jogging along quietly, as they were wont to do, when bound to some ordination or ecclesiastical council. While yet within hearing, one of the riders stopped to pluck a switch.

‘Of the two, reverend sir,’ said the voice like the deacon’s, ‘I had rather miss an ordination dinner than to-night’s meeting. They tell me that some of our community are to be here from Falmouth and beyond, and others from Connecticut and Rhode Island, besides several of the Indian pow-wows, who, after their fashion, know almost as much deviltry as the best of us. Moreover, there is a goodly young woman to be taken into communion.’

‘Mighty well, Deacon Gookin!’ replied the solemn old tones of the minister. ‘Spur up, or we shall be late. Nothing can be done, you know, until I get on the ground.’

The hoofs clattered again; and the voices, talking so strangely in the empty air, passed on through the forest, where no church had ever been gathered or solitary Christian prayed. Whither, then, could these holy men be journeying so deep into the heathen wilderness? Young Goodman Brown caught hold of a tree for support, being ready to sink down on the ground, faint and overburdened with the heavy sickness of his heart. He looked up to the sky, doubt-

ing whether there really was a heaven above him. Yet there was the blue arch, and the stars brightening in it.

'With heaven above and Faith below, I will yet stand firm against the Devil!' cried Goodman Brown.

While he still gazed upward into the deep arch of the firmament and had lifted his hands to pray, a cloud, though no wind was stirring, hurried across the zenith and hid the brightening stars. The blue sky was still visible except directly overhead, where this black mass of cloud was sweeping swiftly northward. Aloft in the air, as if from the depths of the cloud, came a confused and doubtful sound of voices. Once the listener fancied that he could distinguish the accents of townspeople of his own, men and women, both pious and ungodly, many of whom he had met at the communion-table, and had seen others rioting at the tavern. The next moment, so indistinct were the sounds, he doubted whether he had heard aught but the murmur of the old forest, whispering without a wind. Then came a stronger swell of those familiar tones, heard daily in the sunshine at Salem village, but never until now from a cloud of night. There was one voice, of a young woman, uttering lamentations, yet with an uncertain sorrow, and entreating for some favour, which, perhaps, it would grieve her to obtain; and all the unseen multitude, both saints and sinners, seemed to encourage her onward.

'Faith!' shouted Goodman Brown, in a voice of agony and desperation; and the echoes of the forest mocked him, crying, 'Faith! Faith!' as if bewildered wretches were seeking her all through the wilderness.

The cry of grief, rage, and terror was yet piercing the night, when the unhappy husband held his breath for a response. There was a scream, drowned immediately in a louder murmur of voices, fading into far-off laughter, as the dark cloud swept away, leaving the clear and silent sky above Goodman Brown. But something fluttered lightly down through the air and caught on the branch of a tree. The young man seized it, and beheld a pink ribbon.

'My Faith is gone!' cried he, after one stupefied moment. 'There is no good on earth; and sin is but a name. Come, Devil; for to thee is this world given.'

And, maddened with despair, so that he laughed loud and long, did Goodman Brown grasp his staff and set forth again, at such a rate that he seemed to fly along the forest path rather than to walk or run. The road grew wilder and drearier and more faintly traced, and vanished at length, leaving him in the heart of the dark wilderness, still rushing onward with the instinct that guides mortal man to evil. The whole forest was peopled with frightful sounds,—the creaking of the trees, the howling of wild beasts, and the yell of Indians; while sometimes the wind tolled like a distant church-bell, and sometimes gave a broad roar around the traveller, as if all Nature were laughing him to scorn. But he was himself the chief horror of the scene, and shrank not from its other horrors.

'Ha! ha! ha!' roared Goodman Brown when the wind laughed at him. 'Let us hear which will laugh loudest. Think not to frighten me with your

deviltry. Come witch, come wizard, come Indian pow-wow, come Devil himself, and here comes Goodman Brown. You may as well fear him as he fear you.'

In truth, all through the haunted forest there could be nothing more frightful than the figure of Goodman Brown. On he flew among the black pines, brandishing his staff with frenzied gestures, now giving vent to an inspiration of horrid blasphemy, and now shouting forth such laughter as set all the echoes of the forest laughing like demons around him. The fiend in his own shape is less hideous than when he rages in the breast of man. Thus sped the demoniac on his course, until, quivering among the trees, he saw a red light before him, as when the felled trunks and branches of a clearing have been set on fire, and throw up their lurid blaze against the sky, at the hour of midnight. He paused, in a lull of the tempest that had driven him onward, and heard the swell of what seemed a hymn rolling solemnly from a distance with the weight of many voices. He knew the tune; it was a familiar one in the choir of the village meeting-house. The verse died heavily away, and was lengthened by a chorus, not of human voices, but of all the sounds of the benighted wilderness pealing in awful harmony together. Goodman Brown cried out; and his cry was lost to his own ear by its unison with the cry of the desert.

In the interval of silence he stole forward until the light glared full upon his eyes. At one extremity of an open space, hemmed in by the dark wall of the forest, arose a rock, bearing some rude, natural resemblance either to an altar or a pulpit, and surrounded by four blazing pines, their tops aflame, their stems untouched, like candles at an evening meeting. The mass of foliage that had overgrown the summit of the rock was all on fire, blazing high into the night and fitfully illuminating the whole field. Each pendent twig and leafy festoon was in a blaze. As the red light arose and fell, a numerous congregation alternately shone forth, then disappeared in shadow, and again grew, as it were, out of the darkness, peopling the heart of the solitary woods at once.

'A grave and dark-clad company,' quoth Goodman Brown.

In truth they were such. Among them, quivering to and fro between gloom and splendour, appeared faces that would be seen next day at the council board of the province, and others which, Sabbath after Sabbath, looked devoutly heavenward, and benignantly over the crowded pews, from the holiest pulpits in the land. Some affirm that the lady of the governor was there. At least there were high dames well known to her, and wives of honoured husbands, and widows, a great multitude, and ancient maidens, all of excellent repute, and fair young girls, who trembled lest their mothers should espy them. Either the sudden gleams of light flashing over the obscure field dedazzled Goodman Brown, or he recognized a score of the church-members of Salem village famous for their especial sanctity. Good old Deacon Gookin had arrived, and waited at the skirts of that venerable saint, his revered pastor. But, irreverently consorting with these grave, reputable, and pious people, these elders of the church, these chaste dames and dewy virgins, there were men of

dissolute lives and women of spotted fame, wretches given over to all mean and filthy vice, and suspected even of horrid crimes. It was strange to see that the good shrank not from the wicked, nor were the sinners abashed by the saints. Scattered also among their palefaced enemies were the Indian priests, or pow-wows, who had often scared their native forest with more hideous incantations than any known to English witchcraft.

'But where is Faith?' thought Goodman Brown; and, as hope came into his heart, he trembled.

Another verse of the hymn arose, a slow and mournful strain, such as the pious love, but joined to words which expressed all that our nature can conceive of sin, and darkly hinted at far more. Unfathomable to mere mortals is the lore of fiends. Verse after verse was sung; and still the chorus of the desert swelled between like the deepest tone of a mighty organ; and with the final peal of that dreadful anthem there came a sound, as if the roaring wind, the rushing streams, the howling beasts, and every other voice of the unconverted wilderness were mingling and according with the voice of guilty man in homage to the prince of all. The four blazing pines threw up a loftier flame, and obscurely discovered shapes and visages of horror on the smoke-wreaths above the impious assembly. At the same moment the fire on the rock shot redly forth and formed a glowing arch above its base, where now appeared a figure. With reverence be it spoken, the figure bore no slight similitude, both in garb and manner, to some grave divine of the New England churches.

'Bring forth the converts!' cried a voice that echoed through the field and rolled into the forest.

At the word, Goodman Brown stepped forth from the shadow of the trees and approached the congregation, with whom he felt a loathful brotherhood by the sympathy of all that was wicked in his heart. He could have wellnigh sworn that the shape of his own dead father beckoned him to advance, looking downward from a smoke-wreath, while a woman, with dim features of despair, threw out her hand to warn him back. Was it his mother? But he had no power to retreat one step, nor to resist, even in thought, when the minister and good old Deacon Gookin seized his arms and led him to the blazing rock. Thither came also the slender form of a veiled female, led between Goody Cloyse, that pious teacher of the catechism, and Martha Carrier, who had received the Devil's promise to be queen of hell. A rampant hag was she. And there stood the proselytes beneath the canopy of fire.

'Welcome, my children,' said the dark figure, 'to the communion of your race. Ye have found thus young your nature and your destiny. My children, look behind you!'

They turned; and flashing forth, as it were, in a sheet of flame, the fiend worshippers were seen; the smile of welcome gleamed darkly on every visage.

'There,' resumed the sable form, 'are all whom ye have revered from youth. Ye deemed them holier than yourselves, and shrank from your own sin, contrasting it with their lives of righteousness and prayerful aspirations heavenward. Yet here are they all in my worshipping assembly. This night

it shall be granted you to know their secret deeds; how hoary-bearded elders of the church have whispered wanton words to the young maids of their households; how many a woman, eager for widow's weeds, has given her husband a drink at bedtime and let him sleep his last sleep in her bosom; how beardless youths have made haste to inherit their father's wealth; and how fair damsels—blush not, sweet ones—have dug little graves in the garden, and bidden me, the sole guest, to an infant's funeral. By the sympathy of your human hearts for sin ye shall scent out all the places—whether in church, bedchamber, street, field, or forest—where crime has been committed, and shall exult to behold the whole earth one stain of guilt, one mighty blood-spot. Far more than this. It shall be yours to penetrate, in every bosom, the deep mystery of sin, the fountain of all wicked arts, and which inexhaustibly supplies more evil impulses than human power—than my power at its utmost—can make manifest in deeds. And now, my children, look upon each other.'

They did so; and, by the blaze of the hell-kindled torches, the wretched man beheld his Faith, and the wife her husband, trembling before that unhallowed altar.

'Lo, there ye stand, my children,' said the figure, in a deep and solemn tone, almost sad with its despairing awfulness, as if his once angelic nature could yet mourn for our miserable race. 'Depending upon one another's hearts, ye had still hoped that virtue were not all a dream. Now are ye undeceived. Evil is the nature of mankind. Evil must be your only happiness. Welcome again, my children, to the communion of your race.'

'Welcome,' repeated the fiend worshippers, in one cry of despair and triumph.

And there they stood, the only pair, as it seemed, who were yet hesitating on the verge of wickedness in this dark world. A basin was hollowed, naturally, in the rock. Did it contain water, reddened by the lurid light? or was it blood? or, perchance, a liquid flame? Herein did the shape of evil dip his hand and prepare to lay the mark of baptism upon their foreheads, that they might be partakers of the mystery of sin, more conscious of the secret guilt of others, both in deed and thought, than they could now be of their own. The husband cast one look at his pale wife, and Faith at him. What polluted wretches would the next glance show them to each other, shuddering alike at what they disclosed and what they saw!

'Faith! Faith!' cried the husband, 'look up to Heaven, and resist the wicked one.'

Whether Faith obeyed, he knew not. Hardly had he spoken, when he found himself amid calm night and solitude, listening to a roar of the wind which died heavily away through the forest. He staggered against the rock, and felt it chill and damp; while a hanging twig, that had been all on fire, besprinkled his cheek with the coldest dew.

The next morning young Goodman Brown came slowly into the street of Salem village, staring around him like a bewildered man. The good old minister was taking a walk along the graveyard to get an appetite for break-

fast and meditate his sermon, and bestowed a blessing, as he passed, on Goodman Brown. He shrank from the venerable saint as if to avoid an anathema. Old Deacon Gookin was at domestic worship, and the holy words of his prayer were heard through the open window. 'What God doth the wizard pray to?' quoth Goodman Brown. Goody Cloyse, that excellent old Christian, stood in the early sunshine at her own lattice, catechizing a little girl who had brought her a pint of morning's milk. Goodman Brown snatched away the child as from the grasp of the fiend himself. Turning the corner by the meeting-house, he spied the head of Faith, with the pink ribbons, gazing anxiously forth, and bursting into such joy at sight of him that she skipped along the street and almost kissed her husband before the whole village. But Goodman Brown looked sternly and sadly into her face, and passed on without a greeting.

Had Goodman Brown fallen asleep in the forest, and only dreamed a wild dream of a witch-meeting?

Be it so, if you will; but, alas! it was a dream of evil omen for young Goodman Brown. A stern, a sad, a darkly meditative, a distrustful, if not a desperate, man did he become from the night of that fearful dream. On the Sabbath day, when the congregation were singing a holy psalm, he could not listen, because an anthem of sin rushed loudly upon his ear and drowned all the blessed strain. When the minister spoke from the pulpit, with power and fervid eloquence, and with his hand on the open Bible, of the sacred truths of our religion, and of saint-like lives and triumphant deaths, and of future bliss or misery unutterable, then did Goodman Brown turn pale, dreading lest the roof should thunder down upon the grey blasphemer and his hearers. Often, awaking suddenly at midnight, he shrank from the bosom of Faith; and at morning or eventide, when the family knelt down to prayer, he scowled, and muttered to himself, and gazed sternly at his wife, and turned away. And when he had lived long, and was borne to his grave, a hoary corpse, followed by Faith, an aged woman, and children and grandchildren, a goodly procession, besides neighbours not a few, they carved no hopeful verse upon his tombstone; for his dying hour was gloom.

THE SIRE DE MALETROIT'S DOOR¹

by Robert Louis Stevenson

DENIS DE BEAULIEU was not yet two-and-twenty, but he counted himself a grown man, and a very accomplished cavalier into the bargain. Lads were early formed in that rough, warfaring epoch; and when one has been in a pitched battle and a dozen raids, has killed one's man in an honourable fashion, and knows a thing or two of strategy and

¹ From *New Arabian Nights*, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1887.

mankind, a certain swagger in the gait is surely to be pardoned. He had put up his horse with due care, and supped with due deliberation; and then, in a very agreeable frame of mind, went out to pay a visit in the grey of the evening. It was not a very wise proceeding on the young man's part. He would have done better to remain beside the fire or go decently to bed. For the town was full of the troops of Burgundy and England under a mixed command; and though Denis was there on safe-conduct, his safe-conduct was like to serve him little on a chance encounter.

It was September, 1429; the weather had fallen sharp; a flighty piping wind, laden with showers, beat about the township; and the dead leaves ran riot along the streets. Here and there a window was already lighted up; and the noise of men-at-arms making merry over supper within, came forth in fits and was swallowed up and carried away by the wind. The night fell swiftly; the flag of England, fluttering on the spiretop, grew ever fainter and fainter against the flying clouds—a black speck like a swallow in the tumultuous, leaden chaos of the sky. As the night fell the wind rose and began to hoot under archways and roar amid the tree-tops in the valley below the town.

Denis de Beaulieu walked fast and was soon knocking at his friend's door; but though he promised himself to stay only a little while and make an early return, his welcome was so pleasant, and he found so much to delay him, that it was already long past midnight before he said good-bye upon the threshold. The wind had fallen again in the meanwhile; the night was as black as the grave; not a star, nor a glimmer of moonshine, slipped through the canopy of cloud. Denis was ill-acquainted with the intricate lanes of Château Landon; even by daylight he had found some trouble in picking his way; and in this absolute darkness he soon lost it altogether. He was certain of one thing only—to keep mounting the hill; for his friend's house lay at the lower end, or tail, of Château Landon, while the inn was up at the head, under the great church spire. With this clue to go upon he stumbled and groped forward, now breathing more freely in open places where there was a good slice of sky overhead, now feeling along the wall in stifling closes. It is an eerie and mysterious position to be thus submerged in opaque blackness in an almost unknown town. The silence is terrifying in its possibilities. The touch of cold window bars to the exploring hand startles the man like the touch of a toad; the inequalities of the pavement shake his heart into his mouth; a piece of denser darkness threatens an ambuscade or a chasm in the pathway; and where the air is brighter, the houses put on strange and bewildering appearances, as if to lead him farther from his way. For Denis, who had to regain his inn without attracting notice, there was real danger as well as mere discomfort in the walk; and he went warily and boldly at once, and at every corner paused to make an observation.

He had been for some time threading a lane so narrow that he could touch a wall with either hand, when it began to open out and go sharply downward. Plainly this lay no longer in the direction of his inn; but the hope of a little more light tempted him forward to reconnoitre. The lane

ended in a terrace with a bartisan wall, which gave an outlook between high houses, as out of an embrasure, into the valley lying dark and formless several hundred feet below. Denis looked down, and could discern a few tree-tops waving and a single speck of brightness where the river ran across a weir. The weather was clearing up, and the sky had lightened, so as to show the outline of the heavier clouds and the dark margin of the hills. By the uncertain glimmer, the house on his left hand should be a place of some pretensions; it was surmounted by several pinnacles and turret-tops; the round stern of a chapel, with a fringe of flying buttresses, projected boldly from the main block; and the door was sheltered under a deep porch carved with figures and overhung by two long gargoyles. The windows of the chapel gleamed through their intricate tracery with a light as of many tapers, and threw out the buttresses and the peaked roof in a more intense blackness against the sky. It was plainly the hotel of some great family of the neighbourhood; and as it reminded Denis of a town house of his own at Bourges, he stood for some time gazing up at it and mentally gauging the skill of the architects and the consideration of the two families.

There seemed to be no issue to the terrace but the lane by which he had reached it; he could only retrace his steps, but he had gained some notion of his whereabouts, and hoped by this means to hit the main thoroughfare and speedily regain the inn. He was reckoning without that chapter of accidents which was to make this night memorable above all others in his career; for he had not gone back above a hundred yards before he saw a light coming to meet him, and heard loud voices speaking together in the echoing of the lane. It was a party of men-at-arms going the night round with torches. Denis assured himself that they had all been making free with the wine-bowl, and were in no mood to be particular about safe-conducts or the niceties of chivalrous war. It was as like as not that they would kill him like a dog and leave him where he fell. The situation was inspiring but nervous. Their own torches would conceal him from sight, he reflected; and he hoped that they would drown the noise of his footsteps with their own empty voices. If he were but fleet and silent, he might evade their notice altogether.

Unfortunately, as he turned to beat a retreat, his foot rolled upon a pebble; he fell against the wall with an ejaculation, and his sword rang loudly on the stones. Two or three voices demanded who went there—some in French, some in English; but Denis made no reply, and ran the faster down the lane. Once upon the terrace, he paused to look back. They still kept calling after him, and just then began to double the pace in pursuit, with a considerable clank of armour, and great tossing of the torch-light to and fro in the narrow jaws of the passage.

Denis cast a look around and darted into the porch. There he might escape observation, or—if that were too much to expect—was in a capital posture whether for parley or defence. So thinking, he drew his sword and tried to set his back against the door. To his surprise, it yielded behind

his weight; and though he turned in a moment, continued to swing back on oiled and noiseless hinges, until it stood wide open on a black exterior. When things fall out opportunely for the person concerned, he is not apt to be critical about the how or why, his own immediate personal convenience seeming a sufficient reason for the strangest oddities and revolutions in our sublunary things; and so Denis, without a moment's hesitation, stepped within and partly closed the door behind him to conceal his place of refuge. Nothing was further from his thoughts than to close it altogether; but for some inexplicable reason—perhaps by a spring or a weight—the ponderous mass of oak whipped itself out of his fingers and clanked to, with a formidable rumble and a noise like the falling of an automatic bar.

The round, at that very moment, debouched upon the terrace and proceeded to summon him with shouts and curses. He heard them ferreting in the dark corners; the stock of a lance even rattled along the outer surface of the door behind which he stood; but these gentlemen were in too high a humour to be long delayed, and soon made off down a corkscrew pathway which had escaped Denis's observation, and passed out of sight and hearing along the battlements of the town.

Denis breathed again. He gave them a few minutes' grace for fear of accidents, and then groped about for some means of opening the door and slipping forth again. The inner surface was quite smooth, not a handle, not a moulding, not a projection of any sort. He got his finger-nails round the edges and pulled, but the mass was immovable. He shook it, it was as firm as a rock. Denis de Beaulieu frowned and gave vent to a little noiseless whistle. What ailed the door? he wondered. Why was it open? How came it to shut so easily and so effectually after him? There was something obscure and underhand about all this, that was little to the young man's fancy. It looked like a snare; and yet who would suppose a snare in such a quiet by-street and in a house of so prosperous and even noble an exterior? And yet—snare or no snare, intentionally or unintentionally—here he was, prettily trapped; and for the life of him he could see no way out of it again. The darkness began to weigh upon him. He gave ear; all was silent without, but within and close by he seemed to catch a faint sighing, a faint sobbing rustle, a little stealthy creak—as though many persons were at his side, holding themselves quite still, and governing even their respiration with the extreme of slyness. The idea went to his vitals with a shock, and he faced about suddenly as if to defend his life. Then, for the first time, he became aware of a light about the level of his eyes and at some distance in the interior of the house—a vertical thread of light, widening towards the bottom, such as might escape between two wings of arras over a doorway. To see anything was a relief to Denis; it was like a piece of solid ground to a man labouring in a morass; his mind seized upon it with avidity; and he stood staring at it and trying to piece together some logical conception of his surroundings. Plainly there was a flight of steps ascending from his own level to that of this illuminated doorway; and indeed he thought he could make

out another thread of light, as fine as a needle and as faint as phosphorescence, which might very well be reflected along the polished wood of a handrail. Since he had begun to suspect that he was not alone, his heart had continued to beat with smothering violence, and an intolerable desire for action of any sort had possessed itself of his spirit. He was in deadly peril, he believed. What could be more natural than to mount the staircase, lift the curtain, and confront his difficulty at once? At least he would be dealing with something tangible; at least he would be no longer in the dark. He stepped slowly forward with outstretched hands, until his foot struck the bottom step; then he rapidly scaled the stairs, stood for a moment to compose his expression, lifted the arras and went in.

He found himself in a large apartment of polished stone. There were three doors; one on each of three sides; all similarly curtained with tapestry. The fourth side was occupied by two large windows and a great stone chimney-piece, carved with the arms of the Malétroits. Denis recognised the bearings, and was gratified to find himself in such good hands. The room was strongly illuminated; but it contained little furniture except a heavy table and a chair or two, the hearth was innocent of fire, and the pavement was but sparsely strewn with rushes clearly many days old.

On a high chair beside the chimney, and directly facing Denis as he entered, sat a little old gentleman in a fur tippet. He sat with his legs crossed and his hands folded, and a cup of spiced wine stood by his elbow on a bracket on the wall. His countenance had a strongly masculine cast; not properly human, but such as we see in the bull, the goat, or the domestic boar; something equivocal and wheedling, something greedy, brutal, and dangerous. The upper lip was inordinately full, as though swollen by a blow or a toothache; and the smile, the peaked eyebrows, and the small, strong eyes were quaintly and almost comically evil in expression. Beautiful white hair hung straight all round his head, like a saint's, and fell in a single curl upon the tippet. His beard and moustache were the pink of venerable sweetness. Age, probably in consequence of inordinate precautions, had left no mark upon his hands; and the Malétroit hand was famous. It would be difficult to imagine anything at once so fleshy and so delicate in design; the taper, sensual fingers were like those of one of Leonardo's women; the fork of the thumb made a dimpled protuberance when closed; the nails were perfectly shaped, and of a dead, surprising whiteness. It rendered his aspect tenfold more redoubtable, that a man with hands like these should keep them devoutly folded in his lap like a virgin martyr—that a man with so intense and startling an expression of face should sit patiently on his seat and contemplate people with an unwinking stare, like a god, or a god's statue. His quiescence seemed ironical and treacherous, it fitted so poorly with his looks.

Such was Alain, Sire de Malétroit.

Denis and he looked silently at each other for a second or two.

"Pray step in," said the Sire de Malétroit. "I have been expecting you all the evening."

He had not risen, but he accompanied his words with a smile and a slight but courteous inclination of the head. Partly from the smile, partly from the strange musical murmur with which the Sire prefaced his observation, Denis felt a strong shudder of disgust go through his marrow. And what with disgust and honest confusion of mind, he could scarcely get words together in reply.

"I fear," he said, "that this is a double accident. I am not the person you suppose me. It seems you were looking for a visit; but for my part, nothing was further from my thoughts—nothing could be more contrary to my wishes—than this intrusion."

"Well, well," replied the old gentleman indulgently, "here you are, which is the main point. Seat yourself, my friend, and put yourself entirely at your ease. We shall arrange our little affairs presently."

Denis perceived that the matter was still complicated with some misconception, and he hastened to continue his explanations.

"Your door . . ." he began.

"About my door?" asked the other, raising his peaked eyebrows. "A little piece of ingenuity." And he shrugged his shoulders. "A hospitable fancy! By your own account, you were not desirous of making my acquaintance. We old people look for such reluctance now and then; and when it touches our honour, we cast about until we find some way of overcoming it. You arrive uninvited, but believe me, very welcome."

"You persist in error, sir," said Denis. "There can be no question between you and me. I am a stranger in this countryside. My name is Denis, damoiseau de Beaulieu. If you see me in your house, it is only—"

"My young friend," interrupted the other, "you will permit me to have my own ideas on that subject. They probably differ from yours at the present moment," he added with a leer, "but time will show which of us is in the right."

Denis was convinced he had to do with a lunatic. He seated himself with a shrug, content to wait the upshot; and a pause ensued, during which he thought he could distinguish a hurried gabbling as of prayer from behind the arras immediately opposite him. Sometimes there seemed to be but one person engaged, sometimes two; and the vehemence of the voice, low as it was, seemed to indicate either great haste or an agony of spirit. It occurred to him that this piece of tapestry covered the entrance to the chapel he had noticed from without.

The old gentleman meanwhile surveyed Denis from head to foot with a smile, and from time to time emitted little noises like a bird or a mouse, which seemed to indicate a high degree of satisfaction. This state of matters became rapidly insupportable; and Denis, to put an end to it, remarked politely that the wind had gone down.

The old gentleman fell into a fit of silent laughter, so prolonged and violent that he became quite red in the face. Denis got upon his feet at once, and put on his hat with a flourish.

"Sir," he said, "if you are in your wits, you have affronted me grossly. If you are out of them, I flatter myself I can find better employment for my brains than to talk with lunatics. My conscience is clear; you have made a fool of me from the first moment; you have refused to hear my explanations; and now there is no power under God will make me stay here any longer; and if I cannot make my way out in a more decent fashion, I will hack your door in pieces with my sword."

The Sire de Malétroit raised his right hand and wagged it at Denis with the fore and little fingers extended.

"My dear nephew," he said, "sit down."

"Nephew!" retorted Denis, "you lie in your throat;" and he snapped his fingers in his face.

"Sit down, you rogue!" cried the old gentleman, in a sudden harsh voice, like the barking of a dog. "Do you fancy," he went on, "that when I had made my little contrivance for the door I had stopped short with that? If you prefer to be bound hand and foot till your bones ache, rise and try to go away. If you choose to remain a free young buck, agreeably conversing with an old gentleman—why, sit where you are in peace, and God be with you."

"Do you mean I am a prisoner?" demanded Denis.

"I state the facts," replied the other. "I would rather leave the conclusion to yourself."

Denis sat down again. Externally he managed to keep pretty calm; but within, he was now boiling with anger, now chilled with apprehension. He no longer felt convinced that he was dealing with a madman. And if the old gentleman was sane, what, in God's name, had he to look for? What absurd or tragical adventure had befallen him? What countenance was he to assume?

While he was thus unpleasantly reflecting, the arras that overhung the chapel door was raised, and a tall priest in his robes came forth and, giving a long, keen stare at Denis, said something in an undertone to Sire de Malétroit.

"She is in a better frame of spirit?" asked the latter.

"She is more resigned, messire," replied the priest.

"Now the Lord help her, she is hard to please!" sneered the old gentleman. "A likely stripling—not ill-born—and of her own choosing, too? Why, what more would the jade have?"

"The situation is not usual for a young damself!" said the other, "and somewhat trying to her blushes."

"She should have thought of that before she began the dance. It was none of my choosing, God knows that: but since she is in it, by our Lady, she shall carry it to the end." And then addressing Denis, "Monsieur de Beaulieu," he asked, "may I present you to my niece? She has been waiting your arrival, I may say, with even greater impatience than myself."

Denis had resigned himself with a good grace—all he desired was to

know the worst of it as speedily as possible; so he rose at once, and bowed in acquiescence. The Sire de Malétoit followed his example and limped, with the assistance of the chaplain's arm, towards the chapel door. The priest pulled aside the arras, and all three entered. The building had considerable architectural pretensions. A light groining sprang from six stout columns, and hung down in two rich pendants from the centre of the vault. The place terminated behind the altar in a round end, embossed and honey-combed with a superfluity of ornament in relief, and pierced by many little windows shaped like stars, trefoils, or wheels. These windows were imperfectly glazed, so that the night air circulated freely in the chapel. The tapers, of which there must have been half a hundred burning on the altar, were unmercifully blown about; and the light went through many different phases of brilliancy and semi-eclipse. On the steps in front of the altar knelt a young girl richly attired as a bride. A chill settled over Denis as he observed her costume; he fought with desperate energy against the conclusion that was thrust upon his mind; it could not—it should not—be as he feared.

"Blanche," said the Sire, in his most flute-like tones, "I have brought a friend to see you, my little girl; turn round and give him your pretty hand. It is good to be devout; but it is necessary to be polite, my niece."

The girl rose to her feet and turned towards the new comers. She moved all of a piece; and shame and exhaustion were expressed in every line of her fresh young body; and she held her head down and kept her eyes upon the pavement, as she came slowly forward. In the course of her advance, her eyes fell upon Denis de Beaulieu's feet—feet of which he was justly vain, he it remarked, and wore in the most elegant accoutrement even while travelling. She paused—started, as if his yellow boots had conveyed some shocking meaning—and glanced suddenly up into the wearer's countenance. Their eyes met; shame gave place to horror and terror in her looks; the blood left her lips; with a piercing scream she covered her face with her hands and sank upon the chapel floor.

"That is not the man!" she cried. "My uncle, that is not the man!"

The Sire de Malétoit chirped agreeably. "Of course not," he said; "I expected as much. It was so unfortunate you could not remember his name."

"Indeed," she cried, "indeed, I have never seen this person till this moment—have never so much as set eyes upon him—I never wish to see him again. Sir," she said, turning to Denis, "if you are a gentleman, you will bear me out. Have I ever seen you—have you ever seen me—before this accursed hour?"

"To speak for myself, I have never had that pleasure," answered the young man. "This is the first time, messire, that I have met with your engaging niece."

The old gentleman shrugged his shoulders.

"I am distressed to hear it," he said. "But it is never too late to begin. I had little more acquaintance with my own late lady ere I married her; which proves," he added with a grimace, "that these impromptu marriages

may often produce an excellent understanding in the long run. As the bridegroom is to have a voice in the matter, I will give him two hours to make up for lost time before we proceed with the ceremony." And he turned towards the door, followed by the clergyman.

The girl was on her feet in a moment. "My uncle, you cannot be in earnest," she said. "I declare before God I will stab myself rather than be forced on that young man. The heart rises at it; God forbid such marriages; you dishonour your white hair. Oh, my uncle, pity me! There is not a woman in all the world but would prefer death to such a nuptial. Is it possible," she added, faltering, "is it possible that you do not believe me—that you still think this"—and she pointed at Denis with a tremor of anger and contempt—"that you still think *this* to be the man?"

"Frankly," said the old gentleman, pausing on the threshold, "I do. But let me explain to you once for all, Blanche de Malétroit, my way of thinking about this affair. When you took it into your head to dishonour my family and the name that I have borne, in peace and war, for more than three-score years, you forfeited, not only the right to question my designs, but that of looking me in the face. If your father had been alive, he would have spat on you and turned you out of doors. His was the hand of iron. You may bless your God you have only to deal with the hand of velvet, *mademoiselle*. It was my duty to get you married without delay. Out of pure goodwill, I have tried to find your own gallant for you. And I believe I have succeeded. But before God and all the holy angels, Blanche de Malétroit, if I have not, I care not one jackstraw. So let me recommend you to be polite to our young friend; for upon my word, your next groom may be less appetising."

And with that he went out, with the chaplain at his heels; and the arras fell behind the pair.

The girl turned upon Denis with flashing eyes.

"And what, sir," she demanded, "may be the meaning of all this?"

"God knows," returned Denis gloomily. "I am a prisoner in this house, which seems full of mad people. More I know not; and nothing do I understand."

"And pray how came you here?" she asked.

He told her as briefly as he could. "For the rest," he added, "perhaps you will follow my example, and tell me the answer to all these riddles, and what, in God's name, is like to be the end of it."

She stood silent for a little, and he could see her lips tremble and her tearless eyes burn with a feverish lustre. Then she pressed her forehead in both hands.

"Alas, how my head aches!" she said wearily—"to say nothing of my poor heart! But it is due to you to know my story, unmaidenly as it must seem. I am called Blanche de Malétroit; I have been without father or mother for—oh! for as long as I can recollect, and indeed I have been most unhappy all my life. Three months ago a young captain began to stand

near me every day in church. I could see that I pleased him; I am much to blame, but I was so glad that anyone should love me; and when he passed me a letter, I took it home with me and read it with great pleasure. Since that time he has written many. He was so anxious to speak with me, poor fellow! and kept asking me to leave the door open some evening that we might have two words upon the stair. For he knew how much my uncle trusted me." She gave something like a sob at that, and it was a moment before she could go on. "My uncle is a hard man, but he is very shrewd," she said at last. "He has performed many feats in war, and was a great person at court, and much trusted by Queen Isabeau in old days. How he came to suspect me I cannot tell; but it is hard to keep anything from his knowledge; and this morning, as we came from mass, he took my hand in his, forced it open, and read my little billet, walking by my side all the while. When he had finished, he gave it back to me with great politeness. It contained another request to have the door left open; and this has been the ruin of us all. My uncle kept me strictly in my room until evening, and then ordered me to dress myself as you see me—a hard mockery for a young girl, do you not think so? I suppose, when he could not prevail with me to tell him the young captain's name, he must have laid a trap for him: into which, alas! you have fallen in the anger of God. I looked for much confusion; for how could I tell whether he was willing to take me for his wife on these sharp terms? He might have been trifling with me from the first; or I might have made myself too cheap in his eyes. But truly I had not looked for such a shameful punishment as this! I could not think that God would let a girl be so disgraced before a young man. And now I have told you all; and I can scarcely hope that you will not despise me."

Denis made her a respectful inclination.

"Madam," he said, "you have honoured me by your confidence. It remains for me to prove that I am not unworthy of the honour. Is Messire de Malétroit at hand?"

"I believe he is writing in the *salle* without," she answered.

"May I lead you thither, madam?" asked Denis, offering his hand with his most courtly bearing.

She accepted it; and the pair passed out of the chapel, Blanche in a very drooping and shamefast condition, but Denis strutting and ruffling in the consciousness of a mission, and the boyish certainty of accomplishing it with honour.

The Sire de Malétroit rose to meet them with an ironical obeisance.

"Sir," said Denis with the grandest possible air, "I believe I am to have some say in the matter of this marriage; and let me tell you at once, I will be no party to forcing the inclination of this young lady. Had it been freely offered to me, I should have been proud to accept her hand, for I perceive she is as good as she is beautiful; but as things are, I have now the honour, messire, of refusing."

Blanche looked at him with gratitude in her eyes; but the old gentleman only smiled and smiled, until his smile grew positively sickening to Denis.

"I am afraid," he said, "Monsieur de Beaulieu, that you do not perfectly understand the choice I have to offer you. Follow me, I beseech you, to this window." And he led the way to one of the large windows which stood open on the night. "You observe," he went on, "there is an iron ring in the upper masonry, and reeved through that, a very efficacious rope. Now, mark my words; if you should find your disinclination to my niece's person insurmountable, I shall have you hanged out of this window before sunrise. I shall only proceed to such an extremity with the greatest regret, you may believe me. For it is not at all your death that I desire, but my niece's establishment in life. At the same time, it must come to that if you prove obstinate. Your family, Monsieur de Beaulieu, is very well in its way; but if you sprang from Charlemagne, you should not refuse the hand of a Malétroit with impunity—not if she had been as common as the Paris road—not if she were as hideous as the gargoyle over my door. Neither my niece nor you, nor my own private feelings, move me at all in this matter. The honour of my house has been compromised; I believe you to be the guilty person; at least you are now in the secret; and you can hardly wonder if I request you to wipe out the stain. If you will not, your blood be on your own head! It will be no great satisfaction to me to have your interesting relics kicking their heels in the breeze below my windows; but half a loaf is better than no bread, and if I cannot cure the dishonour, I shall at least stop the scandal."

There was a pause.

"I believe there are other ways of settling such imbroglios among gentlemen," said Denis. "You wear a sword, and I hear you have used it with distinction."

The Sire de Malétroit made a signal to the chaplain, who crossed the room with long silent strides and raised the arras over the third of the three doors. It was only a moment before he let it fall again; but Denis had time to see a dusky passage full of armed men.

"When I was a little younger, I should have been delighted to honour you, Monsieur de Beaulieu," said Sire Alain; "but I am now too old. Faithful retainers are the sinews of age, and I must employ the strength I have. This is one of the hardest things to swallow as a man grows up in years; but with a little patience, even this becomes habitual. You and the lady seem to prefer the *salle* for what remains of your two hours; and as I have no desire to cross your preference, I shall resign it to your use with all the pleasure in the world. No haste!" he added, holding up his hand, as he saw a dangerous look come into Denis de Beaulieu's face. "If your mind revolts against hanging, it will be time enough two hours hence to throw yourself out of the window or upon the pikes of my retainers. Two hours of life are always two hours. A great many things may turn up in even as little a while as that. And, besides, if I understand her appearance, my niece has

still something to say to you. You will not disfigure your last hours by a want of politeness to a lady?"

Denis looked at Blanche, and she made him an imploring gesture.

It is likely that the old gentleman was hugely pleased at this symptom of an understanding; for he smiled on both, and added sweetly: "If you will give me your word of honour, Monsieur de Beaulieu, to wait my return at the end of two hours before attempting anything desperate, I shall withdraw my retainers, and let you speak in greater privacy with mademoiselle."

Denis again glanced at the girl, who seemed to beseech him to agree.

"I give you my word of honour," he said.

Messire de Malétroit bowed, and proceeded to limp about the apartment, clearing his throat the while with that odd musical chirp which had already grown so irritating in the ears of Denis de Beaulieu. He first possessed himself of some papers which lay upon the table; then he went to the mouth of the passage and appeared to give an order to the men behind the arras; and lastly he hobbled out through the door by which Denis had come in, turning upon the threshold to address a last smiling bow to the young couple, and followed by the chaplain with a hand-lamp.

No sooner were they alone than Blanche advanced towards Denis with her hands extended. Her face was flushed and excited, and her eyes shone with tears.

"You shall not die!" she cried, "you shall marry me after all."

"You seem to think, madam," replied Denis, "that I stand much in fear of death."

"Oh, no, no," she said, "I see you are no poltroon. It is for my own sake—I could not bear to have you slain for such a scruple."

"I am afraid," returned Denis, "that you underrate the difficulty, madam. What you may be too generous to refuse, I may be too proud to accept. In a moment of noble feeling towards me, you forgot what you perhaps owe to others."

He had the decency to keep his eyes upon the floor as he said this, and after he had finished, so as not to spy upon her confusion. She stood silent for a moment, then walked suddenly away, and falling on her uncle's chair, fairly burst out sobbing. Denis was in the acme of embarrassment. He looked round, as if to seek for inspiration, and seeing a stool, plumped down upon it for something to do. There he sat, playing with the guard of his rapier, and wishing himself dead a thousand times over, and buried in the nastiest kitchen-heap in France. His eyes wandered round the apartment, but found nothing to arrest them. There were such wide spaces between the furniture, the light fell so badly and cheerlessly over all, the dark outside air looked in so coldly through the windows, that he thought he had never seen a church so vast, nor a tomb so melancholy. The regular sobs of Blanche de Malétroit measured out the time like the ticking of a clock. He read the device upon the shield over and over again, until his eyes became obscured; he stared into shadowy corners until he imagined they were swarm-

ing with horrible animals; and every now and again he awoke with a start, to remember that his last two hours were running, and death was on the march.

Often and oftener, as the time went on, did his glance settle on the girl herself. Her face was bowed forward and covered with her hands, and she was shaken at intervals by the convulsive hiccup of grief. Even thus she was not an unpleasant object to dwell upon, so plump and yet so fine, with a warm brown skin, and the most beautiful hair, Denis thought, in the whole world of womankind. Her hands were like her uncle's; but they were more in place at the end of her young arms, and looked infinitely soft and caressing. He remembered how her blue eyes had shone upon him, full of anger, pity, and innocence. And the more he dwelt on her perfections, the uglier death looked, and the more deeply was he smitten with penitence at her continued tears. Now he felt that no man could have the courage to leave a world which contained so beautiful a creature; and now he would have given forty minutes of his last hour to have unsaid his cruel speech.

Suddenly a hoarse and ragged peal of cockcrow rose to their ears from the dark valley below the windows. And this shattering noise in the silence of all around was like a light in a dark place, and shook them both out of their reflections.

"Alas, can I do nothing to help you?" she said, looking up.

"Madam," replied Denis, with a fine irrelevancy, "if I have said anything to wound you, believe me, it was for your own sake and not for mine."

She thanked him with a tearful look.

"I feel your position cruelly," he went on. "The world has been bitter hard on you. Your uncle is a disgrace to mankind. Believe me, madam, there is no young gentleman in all France but would be glad of my opportunity to die in doing you a momentary service."

"I know already that you can be very brave and generous," she answered. "What I *want* to know is whether I can serve you—now or afterwards," she added, with a quaver.

"Most certainly," he answered with a smile. "Let me sit beside you as if I were a friend, instead of a foolish intruder; try to forget how awkwardly we are placed to one another; make my last moments go pleasantly; and you will do me the chief service possible."

"You are very gallant," she added, with a yet deeper sadness . . . "very gallant . . . and it somehow pains me. But draw nearer, if you please; and if you find anything to say to me, you will at least make certain of a very friendly listener. Ah! Monsieur de Beaulieu," she broke forth—"ah! Monsieur de Beaulieu, how can I look you in the face?" And she fell to weeping again with a renewed effusion.

"Madam," said Denis, taking her hand in both of his, "reflect on the little time I have before me, and the great bitterness into which I am cast by the sight of your distress. Spare me, in my last moments, the spectacle of what I cannot cure even with the sacrifice of my life."

"I am very selfish," answered Blanche. "I will be braver, Monsieur de Beaulieu, for your sake. But think if I can do you no kindness in the future—if you have no friends to whom I could carry your adieux. Charge me as heavily as you can; every burden will lighten, by so little, the invaluable gratitude I owe you. Put it in my power to do something more for you than weep."

"My mother is married again, and has a young family to care for. My brother Guichard will inherit my fiefs; and if I am not in error, that will content him amply for my death. Life is a little vapour that passeth away, as we are told by those in holy orders. When a man is in a fair way and sees all life open in front of him, he seems to himself to make a very important figure in the world. His horse whinnies to him; the trumpets blow and the girls look out of window as he rides into town before his company; he receives many assurances of trust and regard—sometimes by express in a letter—sometimes face to face, with persons of great consequence falling on his neck. It is not wonderful if his head is turned for a time. But once he is dead, were he as brave as Hercules or as wise as Solomon, he is soon forgotten. It is not ten years since my father fell, with many other knights around him, in a very fierce encounter, and I do not think that any one of them, nor so much as the name of the fight, is now remembered. No, no, madam, the nearer you come to it, you see that death is a dark and dusty corner, where a man gets into his tomb and has the door shut after him till the judgment day. I have few friends just now, and once I am dead I shall have none."

"Ah, Monsieur de Beaulieu!" she exclaimed, "you forget Blanche de Malé-
troit."

"You have a sweet nature, madam, and you are pleased to estimate a little service far beyond its worth."

"It is not that," she answered. "You mistake me if you think I am so easily touched by my own concerns. I say so, because you are the noblest man I have ever met; because I recognise in you a spirit that would have made even a common person famous in the land."

"And yet here I die in a mouse-trap—with no more noise about it than my own squeaking," answered he.

A look of pain crossed her face, and she was silent for a little while. Then a light came into her eyes, and with a smile she spoke again.

"I cannot have my champion think meanly of himself. Anyone who gives his life for another will be met in Paradise by all the heralds and angels of the Lord God. And you have no such cause to hang your head. For . . . Pray, do you think me beautiful?" she asked, with a deep flush.

"Indeed, madam, I do," he said.

"I am glad of that," she answered heartily. "Do you think there are many men in France who have been asked in marriage by a beautiful maiden—with her own lips—and who have refused her to her face? I know you men would half despise such a triumph; but believe me, we women know more of

what is precious in love. There is nothing that should set a person higher in his own esteem; and we women would prize nothing more dearly."

"You are very good," he said; "but you cannot make me forget that I was asked in pity and not for love."

"I am not so sure of that," she replied, holding down her head. "Hear me to an end, Monsieur de Beaulieu. I know how you must despise me; I feel you are right to do so; I am too poor a creature to occupy one thought of your mind, although, alas! you must die for me this morning. But when I asked you to marry me, indeed, and indeed, it was because I respected and admired you, and loved you with my whole soul, from the very moment that you took my part against my uncle. If you had seen yourself, and how noble you looked, you would pity rather than despise me. And now," she went on, hurriedly checking him with her hand, "although I have laid aside all reserve and told you so much, remember that I know your sentiments towards me already. I would not, believe me, being nobly born, weary you with importunities into consent. I too have a pride of my own: and I declare before the holy Mother of God, if you should now go back from your word already given, I would no more marry you than I would marry my uncle's groom."

Denis smiled a little bitterly.

"It is a small love," he said, "that shies at a little pride."

She made no answer, although she probably had her own thoughts.

"Come hither to the window," he said, with a sigh. "Here is the dawn."

And indeed the dawn was already beginning. The hollow of the sky was full of essential daylight, colourless and clean; and the valley underneath was flooded with a grey reflection. A few thin vapours clung in the coves of the forest or lay along the winding course of the river. The scene disengaged a surprising effect of stillness, which was hardly interrupted when the cocks began once more to crow among the steadings. Perhaps the same fellow who had made so horrid a clangour in the darkness not half an hour before, now sent up the merriest cheer to greet the coming day. A little wind went bustling and eddying among the tree-tops underneath the windows. And still the daylight kept flooding insensibly out of the east, which was soon to grow incandescent and cast up that red-hot cannon-ball, the rising sun.

Denis looked out over all this with a bit of a shiver. He had taken her hand, and retained it in his almost unconsciously.

"Has the day begun already?" she said; and then, illogically enough: "the night has been so long! Alas! what shall we say to my uncle when he returns?"

"What you will," said Denis, and he pressed her fingers in his.

She was silent.

"Blanche," he said, with a swift, uncertain, passionate utterance, "you have seen whether I fear death. You must know well enough that I would as gladly leap out of that window into the empty air as lay a finger on you without your free and full consent. But if you care for me at all do not let me lose my life in a misapprehension; for I love you better than the whole world!

and though I will die for you blithely, it would be like all the joys of Paradise to live on and spend my life in your service."

As he stopped speaking, a bell began to ring loudly in the interior of the house; and a clatter of armour in the corridor showed that the retainers were returning to their post, and the two hours were at an end.

"After all that you have heard?" she whispered, leaning towards him with her lips and eyes.

"I have heard nothing," he replied.

"The captain's name was Florimond de Champdivers," she said in his ear.

"I did not hear it," he answered, taking her supple body in his arms and covering her wet face with kisses.

A melodious chirping was audible behind, followed by a beautiful chuckle, and the voice of Messire de Malétroit wished his new nephew a good morning

YOUNG MAN AXELBROD¹

by Sinclair Lewis

THE cottonwood is a tree of a slovenly and plebeian habit. Its woolly wisps turn gray the lawns and engender neighborhood hostilities about our town. Yet it is a mighty tree, a refuge and an inspiration; the sun flickers in its towering foliage, whence the tattoo of locusts enlivens our dusty summer afternoons. From the wheat-country out to the sagebrush plains between the buttes and the Yellowstone it is the cottonwood that keeps a little grateful shade for sweating homesteaders.

In Joralemon we called Knute Axelbrod "Old Cottonwood." As a matter of fact, the name was derived not so much from the quality of the man as from the wide grove about his gaunt, white house and red barn. He made a comely row of trees on each side of the country road, so that a humble, daily sort of man, driving beneath them in his lumber-wagon, might fancy himself lord of a private avenue. And at sixty-five Knute was like one of his own cottonwoods, his roots deep in the soil, his trunk weathered by rain and blizzard and baking August noons, his crown spread to the wide horizon of day and the enormous sky of a prairie night.

This immigrant was an American even in speech. Save for a weakness about his j's and w's, he spoke the twangy Yankee English of the land. He was the more American because in his native Scandinavia he had dreamed of America as a land of light. Always through disillusion and weariness he beheld America as the world's nursery for justice, for broad, fair towns, and eager talk; and always he kept a young soul that dared to desire beauty.

As a lad Knute Axelbrod had wished to be a famous scholar, to learn the

¹ From *Century Magazine*, 1917, by permission of the author.

ease of foreign tongues, the romance of history, to unfold in the graciousness of wise books. When he first came to America he worked in a sawmill all day and studied all evening. He mastered enough book-learning to teach district school for two terms; then, when he was only eighteen, a great-hearted pity for faded little Lena Wesselius moved him to marry her. Gay enough, doubtless, was their hike by prairie-schooner to new farm-lands, but Knute was promptly caught in a net of poverty and family. From eighteen to fifty-eight he was always snatching children away from death or the farm away from mortgages.

He had to be content—and generously content he was—with the second-hand glory of his children's success and, for himself, with pilfered hours of reading—that reading of big, thick, dismal volumes of history and economics which the lone, mature learner chooses. Without ever losing his desire for strange cities and the dignity of towers he stuck to his farm. He acquired a half-section, free from debt, fertile, well-stocked, adorned with a cement silo, a chicken-run, a new windmill. He became comfortable, secure, and then he was ready, it seemed, to die; for at sixty-three his work was done, and he was unneeded and alone.

His wife was dead. His sons had scattered afar, one a dentist in Fargo, another a farmer in the Golden Valley. He had turned over his farm to his daughter and son-in-law. They had begged him to live with them, but Knute refused.

"No," he said, "you must learn to stand on your own feet. I will not give you the farm. You pay me four hundred dollars a year rent, and I live on that and vatch you from my hill."

On a rise beside the lone cottonwood which he loved best of all his trees Knute built a tar-paper shack, and here he "bached it"; cooked his meals, made his bed—sometimes, sat in the sun, read many books from the Joralemon library, and began to feel that he was free of the yoke of citizenship which he had borne all his life.

For hours at a time he sat on a backless kitchen-chair before the shack, a wide-shouldered man, white-bearded, motionless; a seer despite his grotesquely baggy trousers, his collarless shirt. He looked across the miles of stubble to the steeple of the Jack-rabbit Forks church and meditated upon the uses of life. At first he could not break the rigidity of habit. He rose at five, found work in cleaning his cabin and cultivating his garden, had dinner exactly at twelve, and went to bed by afterglow. But little by little he discovered that he could be irregular without being arrested. He stayed abed till seven or even eight. He got a large, deliberate, tortoise-shell cat, and played games with it; let it lap milk upon the table, called it the Princess, and confided to it that he had a "sneaking idee" that men were fools to work so hard. Around this coatless old man, his stained waistcoat flapping about a huge torso, in a shanty of rumpled bed and pine table covered with sheets of food-daubed newspaper, hovered all the passionate aspiration of youth and the dreams of ancient beauty.

He began to take long walks by night. In his necessitous life night had ever been a period of heavy slumber in close rooms. Now he discovered the mystery of the dark; saw the prairies wide-flung and misty beneath the moon, heard the voices of grass and cottonwoods and drowsy birds. He tramped for miles. His boots were dew-soaked, but he did not heed. He stopped upon hillocks, shyly threw wide his arms, and stood worshipping the naked, slumbering land.

These excursions he tried to keep secret, but they were bruited abroad. Neighbors, good, decent fellows with no nonsense about walking in the dew at night, when they were returning late from town, drunk, lashing their horses, and flinging whisky-bottles from their racing democrat wagons, saw him, and they spread the tidings that Old Cottonwood was "getting nutty since he gave up his farm to that son-in-law of his and retired. Seen the old codger wandering around at midnight. Wish I had his chance to sleep. Wouldn't catch me out in the night air."

Any rural community from Todd Center to Seringapatam is resentful of any person who varies from its standard, and is morbidly fascinated by any hint of madness. The countryside began to spy on Knute Axelbrod, to ask him questions, and to stare from the road at his shack. He was sensitively aware of it, and inclined to be surly to inquisitive acquaintances. Doubtless that was the beginning of his great pilgrimage.

As a part of the general wild license of his new life,—really, he once roared at that startled cat, the Princess: "By gollies! I ain't going to brush my teeth tonight. All my life I've brushed 'em, and always wanted to skip a time vunce,"—Knute took considerable pleasure in degenerating in his taste in scholarship. He wilfully declined to finish *The Conquest of Mexico*, and began to read light novels borrowed from the Joralemon library. So he rediscovered the lands of dancing and light wines, which all his life he had desired. Some economics and history he did read, but every evening he would stretch out in his buffalo-horn chair, his feet on the cot and the Princess in his lap, and invade Zenda or fall in love with Trilby.

Among the novels he chanced upon a highly optimistic story of Yale in which a worthy young man "earned his way through" college, stroked the crew, won Phi Beta Kappa, and had the most entertaining, yet moral, conversations on or adjacent to "the dear old fence."

As a result of this chronicle, at about three o'clock one morning when Knute Axelbrod was sixty-four years of age, he decided that he would go to college! All his life he had wanted to. Why not do it?

When he awoke in the morning he was not so sure about it as when he had gone to sleep. He saw himself as ridiculous, a ponderous, oldish man among clean-limbed youths, like a dusty cottonwood among silver birches. But for months he wrestled and played with that idea of a great pilgrimage to the Mount of Muses; for he really supposed college to be that sort of place. He believed that all college students, except for the wealthy idlers,

burned to acquire learning. He pictured Harvard and Yale and Princeton as ancient groves set with marble temples, before which large groups of Grecian youths talked gently about astronomy and good government. In his picture they never cut classes or ate.

With a longing for music and books and graciousness such as the most ambitious boy could never comprehend, this thick-faced prairie farmer dedicated himself to beauty, and defied the unconquerable power of approaching old age. He sent for college catalogues and school-books, and diligently began to prepare himself for college.

He found Latin irregular verbs and the whimsicalities of algebra fiendish. They had nothing to do with actual life as he had lived it. But he mastered them; he studied twelve hours a day, as once he had plodded through eighteen hours a day in the hay-field. With history and English literature he had comparatively little trouble; already he knew much of them from his recreative reading. From German neighbors he had picked up enough Plattdeutsch to make German easy. The trick of study began to come back to him from his small school-teaching of forty-five years before. He began to believe that he could really put it through. He kept assuring himself that in college, with rare and sympathetic instructors to help him, there would not be this baffling search, this nervous strain.

But the unreality of the things he studied did disillusion him, and he tired of his new game. He kept it up chiefly because all his life he had kept up onerous labor without any taste for it. Toward the autumn of the second year of his eccentric life he no longer believed that he would ever go to college.

Then a busy little grocer stopped him on the street in Joralemon and quizzed him about his studies, to the delight of the informal club which always loafs at the corner of the hotel.

Knute was silent, but dangerously angry. He remembered just in time how he had once laid wrathful hands upon a hired man, and somehow the man's collarbone had been broken. He turned away and walked home, seven miles, still boiling. He picked up the Princess, and, with her mewing on his shoulder, tramped out again to enjoy the sunset.

He stopped at a reedy slough. He gazed at a hopping plover without seeing it. He plucked at his beard. Suddenly he cried:

"I am going to college. It opens next week. I t'ink that I can pass the examinations."

Two days later he had moved the Princess and his sticks of furniture to his son-in-law's house, had bought a new slouch hat, a celluloid collar, and a solemn suit of black, had wrestled with God in prayer through all of a star-clad night, and had taken the train for Minneapolis, on the way to New Haven.

While he stared out of the car-window Knute was warning himself that the millionaires' sons would make fun of him. Perhaps they would haze

him. He bade himself avoid all these sons of Belial and cleave to his own people, those who "earned their way through."

At Chicago he was afraid with a great fear of the lightning flashes that the swift crowds made on his retina, the batteries of ranked motor-cars that charged at him. He prayed, and ran for his train to New York. He came at last to New Haven.

Not with gibing rudeness, but with politely quizzical eyebrows, Yale received him, led him through entrance examinations, which, after sweaty plowing with the pen, he barely passed, and found for him a room-mate. The room-mate was a large-browed, soft, white grub named Ray Gribble, who had been teaching school in New England, and seemed chiefly to desire college training so that he might make more money as a teacher. Ray Gribble was a hustler; he instantly got work tutoring the awkward son of a steel man, and for board he waited on table.

He was Knute's chief acquaintance. Knute tried to fool himself into thinking he liked the grub, but Ray couldn't keep his damp hands off the old man's soul. He had the skill of a professional exhorter of young men in finding out Knute's motives, and when he discovered that Knute had a hidden desire to dabble in gay, polite literature, Ray said in a shocked way:

"Strikes me a man like you, that's getting old, ought to be thinking more about saving your soul than about all these frills. You leave this poetry and stuff to these foreigners and artists, and you stick to Latin and math and the Bible. I tell you, I've taught school, and I've learned by experience."

With Ray Gribble, Knute lived grubbily, an existence of torn comforters and a smelly lamp, of lexicons and logarithm tables. No leisurely loafing by fireplaces was theirs. They roomed in West Divinity, where gather the theologues, the lesser sort of law students, a whimsical genius or two, and a horde of unplaced freshmen and "scrub seniors."

Knute was shockingly disappointed, but he stuck to his room because outside of it he was afraid. He was a grotesque figure, and he knew it, a white-pollled giant squeezed into a small seat in a classroom, listening to instructors younger than his own sons. Once he tried to sit on the fence. No one but "ringers" sat on the fence any more, and at the sight of him trying to look athletic and young, two upper-class men snickered, and he sneaked away.

He came to hate Ray Gribble and his voluble companions of the submerged tenth of the class, the hewers of tutorial wood. It is doubtless safer to mock the flag than to question that best-established tradition of our democracy—that those who "earn their way through" college are necessarily stronger, braver, and more assured of success than the weaklings who talk by the fire. Every college story presents such a moral. But tremblingly the historian submits that Knute discovered that waiting on table did not make lads more heroic than did football or happy loafing. Fine fellows, cheerful and fearless, were many of the boys who "earned their way," and

able to talk to richer classmates without fawning; but just as many of them assumed an abject respectability as the most convenient pose. They were pickers up of unconsidered trifles; they toadied to the classmates whom they tutored; they wriggled before the faculty committee on scholarships; they looked pious at Dwight Hall prayer-meetings to make an impression on the serious-minded; and they drank one glass of beer at Jake's to show the light-minded that they meant nothing offensive by their piety. In revenge for cringing to the insolent athletics whom they tutored, they would, when safe among their own kind, yammer about the "lack of democracy in colleges today." Not that they were so indiscreet as to do anything about it. They lacked the stuff of really rebellious souls. Knute listened to them and marveled. They sounded like young hired men talking behind his barn at harvest-time.

This submerged tenth hated the dilettantes of the class even more than they hated the bloods. Against one Gilbert Washburn, a rich esthete with more manner than any freshman ought to have, they raged righteously. They spoke of seriousness and industry till Knute, who might once have desired to know lads like Washburn, felt ashamed of himself as a wicked, wasteful old man.

With the friends of his room-mate began Knute's series of disillusionments. Humbly though he sought, he found no inspiration and no comradeship. He was the freak of the class, and aside from the submerged tenth, his classmates were afraid of being "queered" by being seen with him.

As he was still powerful, one who could take up a barrel of pork on his knees, he tried to find friendship among the athletes. He sat at Yale Field, watching the football try-outs, and tried to get acquainted with the candidates. They stared at him and answered his questions grudgingly—beefy youths who in their simple-hearted way showed that they considered him plain crazy.

The place itself began to lose the haze of magic through which he had first seen it. Earth is earth, whether one sees it in Camelot or Joralemon or on the Yale campus—or possibly even in the Harvard yard! The buildings ceased to be temples to Knute; they became structures of brick or stone, filled with young men who lounged at windows and watched him amusedly as he tried to slip by.

The Gargantuan hall of Commons became a tri-daily horror because at the table where he dined were two youths who, having uncommonly penetrating minds, discerned that Knute had a beard, and courageously told the world about it. One of them, named Atchison, was a superior person, very industrious and scholarly, glib in mathematics and manners. He despised Knute's lack of definite purpose in coming to college. The other was a play-boy, a wit and a stealer of street-signs, who had a wonderful sense for a subtle jest; and his references to Knute's beard shook the table with jocund mirth three times a day. So these youths of gentle birth drove the shambling,

wistful old man away from Commons, and thereafter he ate at the lunch-counter at the Black Cat.

Lacking the stimulus of friendship, it was the harder for Knute to keep up the strain of studying the long assignments. What had been a week's pleasant reading in his shack was now thrown at him as a day's task. But he would not have minded the toil if he could have found one as young as himself. They were all so dreadfully old, the money-earners, the serious laborers at athletics, the instructors who worried over their life-work of putting marks in class-record books.

Then, on a sore, bruised day, Knute did meet one who was young.

Knute had heard that the professor who was the idol of the college had berated the too-earnest lads in his Browning class, and insisted that they read *Alice in Wonderland*. Knute floundered dustily about in a second-hand book-shop till he found an *Alice*, and he brought it home to read over his lunch of a hot-dog sandwich. Something in the grave absurdity of the book appealed to him, and he was chuckling over it when Ray Gribble came into the room and glanced at the reader.

"Huh!" said Mr. Gribble.

"That's a fine, funny book," said Knute.

"Huh! *Alice in Wonderland*! I've heard of it. Silly nonsense. Why don't you read something really fine, like Shakespeare or 'Paradise Lost'?"

"Vell—" said Knute, but that was all he could find to say.

With Ray Gribble's glassy eye on him, he could no longer roll and roar with the book. He wondered if indeed he ought not to be reading Milton's pompous anthropological misconceptions. He went unhappily out to an early history class, ably conducted by Blevins, Ph.D.

Knute admired Blevins, Ph.D. He was so tubbed and eye-glassed and terribly right. But most of Blevins's lambs did not like Blevins. They said he was a "crank." They read newspapers in his class and covertly kicked one another.

In the smug, plastered classroom, his arm leaning heavily on the broad tablet-arm of his chair, Knute tried not to miss one of Blevins's sardonic proofs that the correct date of the second marriage of Themistocles was two years and seven days later than the date assigned by that illiterate ass, Frutari of Padua. Knute admired young Blevins's performance, and he felt virtuous in application to these hard, un nonsensical facts.

He became aware that certain lewd fellows of the lesser sort were playing poker just behind him. His prairie-trained ear caught whispers of "Two to dole," and "Raise you two beans." Knute revolved, and frowned upon these mockers of sound learning. As he turned back he was aware that the offenders were chuckling, and continuing their game. He saw that Blevins, Ph.D., perceived that something was wrong; he frowned, but he said nothing. Knute sat in meditation. He saw Blevins as merely a boy. He was sorry for him. He would do the boy a good turn.

When class was over he hung about Blevins's desk till the other students had clattered out. He rumbled:

"Say, Professor, you're a fine fellow. I do something for you. If any of the boys make themselves a nuisance, you yust call on me, and I spank the son of a guns."

Blevins, Ph.D., spake in a manner of culture and nastiness:

"Thanks so much, Axelbrod, but I don't fancy that will ever be necessary. I am supposed to be a reasonably good disciplinarian. Good day. Oh, one moment. There's something I've been wishing to speak to you about. I do wish you wouldn't try quite so hard to show off whenever I call on you during quizzes. You answer at such needless length, and you smile as though there were something highly amusing about me. I'm quite willing to have you regard me as a humorous figure, privately, but there are certain classroom conventions, you know, certain little conventions."

"Why, Professor!" wailed Knute. "I never make fun of you! I didn't know I smile. If I do, I guess it's yust because I am so glad when my stupid old head gets the lesson good."

"Well, well, that's very gratifying, I'm sure. And if you will be a little more careful—"

Blevins, Ph.D., smiled a toothy, frozen smile, and trotted off to the Graduates' Club, to be witty about old Knute and his way of saying "yust," while in the deserted class room Knute sat chill, an old man and doomed. Through the windows came the light of Indian summer; clean, boyish cries rose from the campus. But the lover of autumn smoothed his baggy sleeve, stared at the blackboard, and there saw only the gray of October stubble about his distant shack. As he pictured the college watching him, secretly making fun of him and his smile, he was now faint and ashamed, now bull-anxious. He was lonely for his cat, his fine chair of buffalo horns, the sunny doorstep of his shack, and the understanding land. He had been in college for about one month.

Before he left the classroom he stepped behind the instructor's desk and looked at an imaginary class.

"I might have stood there as a prof if I could have come earlier," he said softly to himself.

Calmed by the liquid autumn gold that flowed through the streets, he walked out Whitney Avenue toward the butte-like hill of East Rock. He observed the caress of the light upon the scarped rock, heard the delicate music of leaves, breathed in air pregnant with tales of old New England. He exulted:

"I could write poetry now if I yust—if I yust could write poetry!"

He climbed to the top of East Rock, whence he could see the Yale buildings like the towers of Oxford, Long Island Sound, and the white glare of Long Island itself beyond the water. He marveled that Knute Axelbrod

of the cottonwood country was looking across an arm of the Atlantic to New York State.

He noticed a freshman on a bench at the edge of the rock, and he became irritated. The freshman was Gilbert Washburn, the snob, the dilettante, of whom Ray Gribble had once said: "That guy is the disgrace of the class. He doesn't go out for anything, high stand or Dwight Hall or anything else. Thinks he's so doggone much better than the rest of the fellows that he doesn't associate with anybody. Thinks he's literary, they say, and yet he doesn't even heel the 'Lit,' like the regular literary fellows! Got no time for a loafing, mooning snob like that."

As Knute stared at the unaware Gil, whose profile was fine in outline against the sky, he was terrifically public-spirited and disapproving and that sort of moral thing. Though Gil was much too well dressed, he seemed moodily discontented.

"What he needs is to vork in a thrashing-crew and sleep in the hay," grumbled Knute almost in the virtuous manner of Gribble. "Then he vould know when he vas vell off, and not look like he had the earache. Pff!"

Gil Washburn rose, trailed toward Knute, glanced at him, hesitated, sat down on Knute's bench.

"Great view!" he said. His smile was eager.

That smile symbolized to Knute all the art of life he had come to college to find. He tumbled out of his moral attitude with ludicrous haste, and every wrinkle of his weathered face creased deep as he answered:

"Yes; I t'ink the Acropolis must be like this here."

"Say, look here, Axelbrod; I've been thinking about you."

"Yas?"

"We ought to know each other. We two are the class scandal. We came here to dream, and these busy little goats like Atchison and Giblets, or whatever your room-mate's name is, think we're fools not to go out for marks. You may not agree with me, but I've decided that you and I are precisely alike."

"What makes you t'ink I come here to dream?" bristled Knute.

"Oh, I used to sit near you at Commons and hear you try to quell jolly old Atchison whenever he got busy discussing the reasons for coming to college. That old, moth-eaten topic! I wonder if Cain and Abel didn't discuss it at the Eden Agricultural College. You know, Abel the mark-grabber, very pious and high stand, and Cain wanting to read poetry."

"Yes," said Knute, "and I guess Prof Adam say, 'Cain, don't you read this poetry; it von't help you in alegbry.'"

"Of course. Say, wonder if you'd like to look at this volume of Musset I was sentimental enough to lug up here today. Picked it up when I was abroad last year."

From his pocket Gil drew such a book as Knute had never seen before, a slender volume, in a strange language, bound in hand-tooled, crushed levant, an effeminate bibelot over which the prairie farmer gasped with

luxurious pleasure. The book almost vanished in his big hands. With a timid forefinger he stroked the levant, ran through the leaves.

"I can't read it, but that's the kind of book I always t'ought there must be some like it," he sighed.

"Let me read you a little. It's French, poetry."

Gil read aloud. He made of the alien verses a music which satisfied Knute's sixty-five years of longing for he had never known what.

"That's—that's fine," he said.

"Listen!" cried Gil. "Ysaye is playing up at Hartford tonight. Let's go hear him. We'll trolley up, make it in plenty of time. Tried to get some of the fellows to come, but they thought I was a nut."

What an Ysaye was, Knute Axelbrod had no notion; but "Sure!" he boomed.

When they got to Hartford they found that between them they had just enough money to get dinner, hear Ysaye from gallery seats, and return only as far as Meriden.

At Meriden Gil suggested:

"Let's walk back to New Haven, then. Can you make it?"

Knute had no knowledge as to whether it was four miles or forty back to the campus, but "Sure!" he said. For the last few months he had been noticing that, despite his bulk, he had to be careful, but tonight he could have flown.

In the music of Ysaye, the first real musician he had ever heard, Knute had found all the incredible things of which he had slowly been reading in William Morris and "Idylls of the King." Tall knights he had beheld, and slim princesses in white samite, the misty gates of forlorn towns, and the glory of the chivalry that never was.

They did walk, roaring down the road beneath the October moon, stopping to steal apples and to exclaim over silvered hills, taking a puerile and very natural joy in chasing a profane dog. It was Gil who talked, and Knute who listened, for the most part; but Knute was lured into tales of the pioneer days, of blizzards, of harvesting, and of the first flame of the green wheat. Regarding the Atchisons and Gribbles of the class both of them were youthfully bitter and supercilious. But they were not bitter long, for they were atavisms tonight. They were wandering minstrels, Gilbert the troubadour with his man-at-arms.

They reached the campus at about five in the morning.

Fumbling for words that would express his feeling, Knute stammered:

"Vell, it was fine. I go to bed now and I dream about—"

"Bed? Rats! Never believe in winding up a party when it's going strong. Too few good parties. Besides, it's only the shank of the evening. Besides, we're hungry. Besides—oh, besides! Wait here a second. I'm going up to my room to get some money, and we'll have some eats. Wait! Please do!"

Knute would have waited all night. He had lived sixty-five years and

traveled fifteen hundred miles and endured Ray Gribble to find Gil Washburn.

Policemen wondered to see the celluloid-collared old man and the expensive-looking boy rolling arm in arm down Chapel Street in search of a restaurant suitable to poets. They were all closed.

"The Ghetto will be awake by now," said Gil. "We'll go buy some eats and take 'em up to my room. I've got some tea there."

Knute shouldered through dark streets beside him as naturally as though he had always been a night-hawk, with an aversion to anything as rustic as beds. Down on Oak Street, a place of low shops, smoky lights, and alley mouths, they found the slum already astir. Gil contrived to purchase boxed biscuits, cream-cheese, chicken-loaf, a bottle of cream. While Gil was chaffering, Knute stared out into the street milkily lighted by wavering gas and the first feebleness of coming day; he gazed upon Kosher signs and advertisements in Russian letters, shawled women and bearded rabbis; and as he looked he gathered contentment which he could never lose. He had traveled abroad tonight.

The room of Gil Washburn was all the useless, pleasant things Knute wanted it to be. There was more of Gil's Paris days in it than of his freshmanhood: cloisonné on the mantelpiece, Persian rugs, a silver tea-service, etchings, and books. Knute Axelbrod of the tar-paper shack and piggy farm-yards gazed in satisfaction. Vast-bearded, sunk in an easy-chair, he clucked amiably while Gil lighted a fire and spread a wicker table.

Over supper they spoke of great men and heroic ideals. It was good talk, and not unsuited with lively references to Gribble and Atchison and Blevins, all asleep now in their correct beds. Gil read snatches of Stevenson and Anatole France; then at last he read his own poetry.

It does not matter whether that poetry was good or bad. To Knute it was a miracle to find one who actually wrote it.

The talk grew slow, and they began to yawn. Knute was sensitive to the lowered key of their Indian-summer madness, and he hastily rose. As he said good-by he felt as though he had but to sleep a little while and return to this unending night of romance.

But he came out of the dormitory upon day. It was six-thirty of the morning, with a still, hard light upon red-brick walls.

"I can go to his room plenty times now; I find my friend," Knute said. He held tight the volume of Musset, which Gil had begged him to take.

As he started to walk the few steps to West Divinity Knute felt very tired. By daylight the adventure seemed more and more incredible.

As he entered the dormitory he sighed heavily:

"Age and youth, I guess they can't team together long." As he mounted the stairs he said: "If I saw the boy again, he would get tired of me. I tell him all I got to say." And as he opened his door, he added: "This is what I

come to college for—this one night; I live for it sixty-five years. I go away before I spoil it.”

He wrote a note to Gil, and began to pack his telescope. He did not even wake Ray Gribble, sonorously sleeping in the stale air.

At five that afternoon, on the day-coach of a westbound train, an old man sat smiling. A lasting content was in his eyes, and in his hands a small book in French, though the curious fact is that this man could not read French.

ONE WITH SHAKESPEARE¹

by Martha Foley

YES, Miss Cox was there, sitting at her desk in the almost empty classroom. Elizabeth took in the theme she had written to make up for a class missed because of illness.

A description of people under changing circumstances was the assignment.

Elizabeth had chosen immigrants arriving at a Boston dock. She had got quite excited as she wrote about the black-eyed women and their red and blue dresses, the swarthy men and their earrings, and the brightness of a faraway Mediterranean land slipping off a rocking boat to be lost in the grayness of Boston streets.

Elizabeth had liked writing this theme better than anything she had done since the description of a sunset. Amethyst and rose with a silver ribbon of river. Elizabeth shivered. A silver ribbon—that was lovely. And so was scarlet kerchief in the night of her hair in this theme. Words were so beautiful.

Miss Cox read the new theme, a red pencil poised in her authoritative fingers. Miss Cox was so strong. She was strongest of all the teachers in the school. Stronger even than the two men teachers, Mr. Carpenter of physics and Mr. Cattell of math. A beautiful strongness. Thought of Miss Cox made Elizabeth feel as she did when two bright shiny words suddenly sprang together to make a beautiful, perfect phrase.

Elizabeth was glad she had Miss Cox as an English teacher and not Miss Foster anymore. Miss Foster had made the class last year count the number of times certain words occurred in Poor Richard's Almanac to be sure they read the book right through word for word. And the words were all so ugly. Like the pictures of Benjamin Franklin. But Miss Cox made you feel the words. As when she read from *The Tale of Two Cities* in her deep singing voice, this is a better thing than I have ever done. Poor Sydney Carton.

Miss Cox had finished the second page of the theme. She was looking up at Elizabeth, her small dark blue eyes lighting up her glasses.

¹ From *Story*. By permission of the author.

"Let me give you a pointer, my dear."

Elizabeth automatically looked toward the blackboard ledge at the chalky pointer until the words my dear bit into her mind. My dear! Miss Cox had called her my dear.

"You have a spark of the divine fire," Miss Cox said. "You should make writing your vocation."

Elizabeth flamed. Miss Cox, my dear, themes about immigrants, blackboards and desks whirled and fused in the divine fire.

Miss Cox marked A in the red pencil at the top of the theme and Elizabeth said thank you and went away.

Elizabeth went back to her desk in the 3A classroom which was in charge of Miss Perry. Miss Perry was her Greek teacher as well as her room teacher. Somehow Miss Perry made Elizabeth hate Greek. Elizabeth liked to think of Greece. White and gold in a blue Aegean. I, Sappho. Wailing Trojan women. Aristotle and Plato and Socrates. Grace and brains, said her father of the men. But that was outside of Greek class. To Miss Perry Greece was the aorist of tithemi and Xenophon's march in the Anabasis. Elizabeth always said to herself as she came into the 3A room I hate Miss Perry, the aorist and Xenophon. Oh, how I hate them.

But this morning Elizabeth only pitied Miss Perry. She had no spark of the divine fire, poor thing.

Greek was the first class this morning. Elizabeth didn't care. She should make writing her vocation. That was something Miss Perry could never do. If she were called on for the list of irregular verbs this morning she would like to tell Miss Perry that. It would explain why she hadn't studied her Greek home lesson. Why should she be bothered with conjugations when she had to describe blue and red men arriving on an alien shore?

"Now, Miss Morris, will you please give me the principal parts of the verb to give."

That was didami. But what was the perfect tense? Divine fire, divine fire.

"If you don't know, you may sit down. But I warn you that unless you do your home lessons better you are not going to pass this month."

Divine fire, divine fire.

The second hour was study class. Under Miss Pratt with the ugly bulb of a nose, splotchy face and eternal smile. Miss Pratt taught something or another to the younger girls down in the sixth class. She always smiled at Elizabeth but Elizabeth seldom smiled back. Her smile never means anything, thought Elizabeth.

Elizabeth dumped her books down on her desk in Miss Pratt's room. She opened Vergil to the part she liked. Where Aeneas told Dido the story of his wandering while the stars waned and drooped in the sky. It was not her lesson. She had had that months ago. But she liked going back over it just as she liked the beginning of the first book. Great bearded Aeneas rang out in *arma virumque cano*. That was strong. She would write strong some day. Strong

like Vergil and fine like Swinburne. I will go back to the great sweet mother, mother and lover of men, the sea.

Swinburne had divine fire. Keats, Shelley, hail to thee, blithe spirit. And Masfield whose autograph she had bought for five shillings, not to help the British but to have a bit of the man who wrote *The Widow in the Bye Street*.

Elizabeth looked out into the school courtyard. Fine green shoots. Yellow on the laburnum. Spring was here. Divine fire, divine fire.

"Miss Morris, haven't you any work to do?"

Miss Pratt smiling. Nasty, nasty smiling. Didn't know whom she was talking to like that? A great writer. A girl who would be famous. Let her ask Miss Cox. Why, I have a spark of the divine fire. I am one with Shakespeare and Keats, Thackeray and Brontë and all the other great writers.

Elizabeth plumped her head in her hands and stared at the Latin page. Opposite was an illustration of an old statue, supposed to be Dido. Further on was a pen-and-ink sketch of Dido mounting the funeral pyre. Further on was a sketch of Aeneas nearing Rome. Further on was the vocabulary. Then the end of the book. Elizabeth turned, page by page. She could not study and if she looked out the window at Spring again Miss Pratt would be nasty.

"Please, Miss Pratt, may I go to the library?"

"Must you go to the library? What for?"

"I have a reference in my history lesson to look up in the encyclopaedia."

"Very well."

The library was large and quiet. A whole floor above Miss Pratt and the study class. It was divided off into alcoves. History in one. Encyclopaedias in another. Languages, sciences. Fiction and poetry were in the farthest end which opened out toward the Fenway. The Fenway with its river and wide sky where Elizabeth liked to walk alone.

Elizabeth had read all the fiction and all the poetry. All of Jane Austen and the Sorrows of Werther and lots of other books which had nothing to do with her classes. She was always afraid one of her teachers would come in some day during study class and ask her what she was reading that book for. But that had never happened. And the librarian never paid any attention to her.

Now she went into the fiction and poetry alcove and sat on a small shelf ladder. She looked out the window at the long line of poplars rimming the fens. What would she call them if she were writing about them? Black sentinels against the sky. Oh, beautiful, oh, beautiful. That was the divine fire.

There was ancient history with Miss Tudor who had had the smallpox and it showed all over her face, and geometry with Mr. Cattell who had a gray beard and gray eyes and gray clothes and gray manner. Elizabeth liked that, gray manner. That was what the Advanced English Composition called penetrating analysis of character. She would do lots of penetrating analysis when she wrote in earnest.

She would write novels, the greatest, most moving novels ever written, like *Jean Christophe*, Elizabeth was deciding when the bell rang for the end of

the history lesson. And in between the novels she would write fine medallions of short stories like Tchekov's, Elizabeth told herself when the bell rang for the end of the geometry lesson. And she would always write lovely poems in between the novels and the short stories, she was thinking when the bell rang for the end of the school day.

Elizabeth walked past Miss Cox's room on her way out of the building. She slowed down her steps as she came to the door. Miss Cox was putting away her things in the drawer of her desk. Elizabeth would dedicate her first book to Miss Cox. To Miss Eleanor G. Cox this book is gratefully dedicated by the author.

Eileen and Ruth were waiting for Elizabeth at the entrance. Eileen was the cousin of a famous poet and her mother was an Anarchist. Elizabeth liked the thought of anyone being an Anarchist. It sounded so much more beautiful than being a Democrat or a Republican. And Ruth, who was a class ahead, had already had her poems printed in the *Transcript*. Four times. And one of the poems had been reprinted by William Stanley Braithwaite in his anthology. Oh, they were going to be great and famous, all three.

"Let's walk home and save our fares for fudge sundaes," said Eileen.

"All right, only I am going to have pineapple," said Ruth.

"I'll go with you but I won't have any sundae," Elizabeth said. "I'm going to save my fares this week to buy Miss Cox flowers."

"You have a crush on Miss Cox."

"Perhaps I have and perhaps I haven't. Anyway, she said something wonderful to me this morning.

"She said I had a spark of the divine fire and should make writing my vocation."

"Oh, that is wonderful. She never told me that, not even after Mr. Braithwaite took one of my poems for his anthology."

"This is the happiest day of my life. Even when I have written many books and proved Miss Cox's faith in me, I shall always look back to this day, I never expected to be so wonderfully happy."

The three girls, arm in arm, walked through the Fenway.

"I tell you, let's not get sundaes. Since Elizabeth's saving her money, it isn't fair to go in and eat them right before her. Let's you, Ruth, and I buy some of those big frosted doughnuts and some bananas and eat them on the Charles River esplanade. Then Elizabeth can have some too."

"All right, and we can watch the sun set."

"Oh, but that's what isn't fair. I to save my money and then eat up what you buy."

"Next time you can give us something."

Elizabeth loved the Charles river. It always hurt her to think that it was on a Charles river bridge that Longfellow should have made up I stood on the bridge at midnight. Perhaps that wasn't so bad but so many parodies of the poem had ridiculed the river. Once Elizabeth had written a "Letter to a River." Elizabeth pretended she was away off somewhere, like in New York,

and was writing to the river to tell how much she missed its beauty. She had put so many lovely phrases in it, she thought, and she couldn't understand why the editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* had sent it back to her. But great writers always had many rejections first. That Scottish writer in whose eyes Ruth said she saw his soul, had said in his lecture that to write greatly, one must first suffer greatly.

How she had suffered, thought Elizabeth. Her math and Greek teachers were so cruel to her. She who had a spark of divine fire to be treated as they treated her. Tears came to her eyes. And now, when she was tired, she was walking home instead of riding so she could buy Miss Cox flowers. Pink sweetheart roses. Little tight knots of flowers. That was suffering and sacrifice. But it was for love as well as for literature.

"I felt the rhythm of the universe last night," Ruth was saying. "I was sitting on the roof in the dark and I felt the night all around me."

"That makes me think of swiftly walk over the western wave, spirit of night. But it always bothers me that the wave is to the east in Boston," said Eileen. "Otherwise I like that poem very much."

"The rhythm of the universe? What do you mean?"

"Oh, you know. The way someone said the stars swing round in their courses. And that's why I never, never want to study astronomy. I want only to imagine the stars. That's so much more beautiful than any facts about them can ever be."

"I don't agree with you at all. Why, when you think that the light of the nearest star started coming to you three years ago and what you were doing then and how this minute some star is starting to send you light that may not get to you until you're far away and old and . . ."

"Stop! Don't give me facts about the stars! You can have those facts about your stars, if you want. But leave me my stars to love as I please."

"Oh, very well. There, now the sky is coloring. See that lovely clear green high up. Pretty soon the deep colors will come. My, these frosted doughnuts are good. Much better than any near where we live."

"There's the first light on the other bank. Over near the Tech building."

That was what it was to have a spark of divine fire, Elizabeth's thoughts flowed on with the darkening river. She could put all this, the river and the sky colors and the lights into writing. People would feel the loveliness of the world as they had never felt it before. People would no longer walk with their heads bent to the street when there was a sunset to be seen. What have you done to her, masters of men, that her head should be bowed down thus, thus in the deepening twilight and golden angelus? Her father said Noyes wrote maudlin singsong. It was jingly sometimes but she did like it. And too many heads were bowed down, you masters of men.

"Mother'll scold me if I stay any later," said Eileen.

"And my mother said she wouldn't get me a new dress for the class party if I came home late again."

"Yes, we must all be going. But isn't it nice to think when you wake up at

home in bed at night that the river is out here, creeping on and on under the stars?"

"No wonder Miss Cox said you had divine fire. Let's put our banana peels in here. This is Spring Clean-Up Week, you know."

"Good night."

"Good night."

"Good night."

Holding the thought of her own greatness close to her, Elizabeth went home. A sliver of moon curled in the sky. That is the moon Shelley, Shakespeare, Spenser and yes, way back, Chaucer looked at. And now I am looking at it.

"Mother, Miss Cox says I have a spark of divine fire. I am to be a great writer some day."

"Isn't that nice? Did you remember not to wipe your pen point on your petticoat today?"

"Oh, mother, you know that's not a question of remembering. I never do it when I'm thinking about it. But you didn't half listen to what Miss Cox said about me."

"Indeed I did. She said you had a divine spark of fire. That means you'll get another A in English this month on your report card."

"It means more than any old report card. It means my whole life. I'm to be a writer, a great writer."

"But first you must finish school and college. And that means you have to do your mathematics better. Remember how angry your father was about that E in geometry last month."

Elizabeth sighed. She went out on the back porch which looked across the city. Lights pricked the blackness. Like a necklace which had spilled over velvet. Oh, words were lovely.

The moon was still there, a more emphatic sliver now. Moon of Shelley and Keats and Shakespeare and my moon said Elizabeth and went in to dinner.

I CAN'T BREATHE¹

by Ring Lardner

July 12,

I AM staying here at the Inn for two weeks with my Uncle Nat and Aunt Jule and I think I will keep a kind of a diary while I am here to help pass the time and so I can have a record of things that happen though goodness knows there isn't likely to anything happen, that is anything exciting with Uncle Nat and Aunt Jule making the plans as they are both at least 35 years old and maybe older.

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Dad and mother are abroad to be gone a month and me coming here is supposed to be a recompence for them not taking me with them. A fine recompence to be left with old people that come to a place like this to rest. Still it would be a heavenly place under different conditions, for instance if Walter were here, too. It would be heavenly if he were here, the very thought of it makes my heart stop.

I can't stand it. I won't think about it.

This is our first seperation since we have been engaged, nearly 17 days. It will be 17 days tomorrow. And the hotel orchestra at dinner this evening played that old thing "Oh how I miss you tonight" and it seemed as if they must be playing it for my benefit though of course the person in that song is talking about how they miss their mother though of course I miss mother too, but a person gets used to missing their mother and it isn't like Walter or the person you are engaged to.

But there won't be any more seperations much longer, we are going to be married in December even if mother does laugh when I talk to her about it because she says I am crazy to even think of getting married at 18.

She got married herself when she was 18, but of course that was "different," she wasn't crazy like I am, she knew whom she was marrying. As if Walter were a policeman or a foreigner or something. And she says she was only engaged once while I have been engaged at least five times a year since I was 14, of course it really isn't as bad as that and I have really only been really what I call engaged six times altogether, but is getting engaged my fault when they keep insisting and hammering at you and if you didn't say yes they would never go home.

But it is different with Walter. I honestly believe if he had not asked me I would have asked him. Of course I wouldn't have, but I would have died. And this is the first time I have ever been engaged to be really married. The other times when they talked about when should we get married I just laughed at them, but I hadn't been engaged to Walter ten minutes when he brought up the subject of marriage and I didn't laugh. I wouldn't be engaged to him unless it was to be married. I couldn't stand it.

Anyway mother may as well get used to the idea because it is "No Foolin'" this time and we have got our plans all made and I am going to be married at home and go out to California and Hollywood on our honeymoon. December, five months away. I can't stand it. I can't wait.

There were a couple of awfully nice looking boys sitting together alone in the dining-room tonight. One of them wasn't so much, but the other was cute. And he—

There's the dance orchestra playing "Always," what they played at the Biltmore the day I met Walter. "Not for just an hour not for just a day." I can't live. I can't breathe.

July 13

This has been a much more exciting day than I expected under the circumstances. In the first place I got two long night letters, one from Walter

and one from Gordon Flint. I don't see how Walter ever had the nerve to send his, there was everything in it and it must have been horribly embarrassing for him while the telegraph operator was reading it over and counting the words to say nothing of embarrassing for the operator.

But the one from Gordon was a kind of a shock. He just got back from a trip around the world, left last December to go on it and got back yesterday and called up our house and Helga gave him my address, and his telegram, well it was nearly as bad as Walter's. The trouble is that Gordon and I were engaged when he went away, or at least he thought so and he wrote to me right along all the time he was away and sent cables and things and for a while I answered his letters, but then I lost track of his itinery and couldn't write to him any more and when I got really engaged to Walter I couldn't let Gordon know because I had no idea where he was besides not wanting to spoil his trip.

And now he still thinks we are engaged and he is going to call me up tomorrow from Chicago and how in the world can I explain things and get him to understand because he is really serious and I like him ever and ever so much and in lots of ways he is nicer than Walter, not really nicer but better looking and there is no comparison between their dancing. Walter simply can't learn to dance, that is really dance. He says it is because he is flat footed, he says that as a joke, but it is true and I wish to heavens it wasn't.

All forenoon I thought and thought and thought about what to say to Gordon when he calls up and finally I couldn't stand thinking about it any more and just made up my mind I wouldn't think about it any more. But I will tell the truth though it will kill me to hurt him.

I went down to lunch with Uncle Nat and Aunt Jule and they were going out to play golf this afternoon and were insisting that I go with them, but I told them I had a headache and then I had a terrible time getting them to go without me. I didn't have a headache at all and just wanted to be alone to think about Walter and besides when you play with Uncle Nat he is always correcting your stance or your swing or something and always puts his hands on my arms or shoulders to show me the right way and I can't stand it to have old men touch me, even if they are your uncle.

I finally got rid of them and I was sitting watching the tennis when that boy that I saw last night, the cute one, came and sat right next to me and of course I didn't look at him and I was going to smoke a cigarette and found I had left my lighter upstairs and I started to get up and go after it when all of a sudden he was offering me his lighter and I couldn't very well refuse it without being rude. So we got to talking and he is even cuter than he looks, the most original and wittiest person I believe I ever met and I haven't laughed so much in I don't know how long.

For one thing he asked me if I had heard Rockefeller's song and I said no and he began singing "Oil alone." Then he asked me if I knew the orange juice song and I told him no again and he said it was "Orange juice sorry you made me cry." I was in hysterics before we had been together ten minutes.

His name is Frank Caswell and he has been out of Dartmouth a year and is 24 years old. That isn't so terribly old, only two years older than Walter and three years older than Gordon. I hate the name Frank, but Caswell is all right and he is so cute.

He was out in California last winter and visited Hollywood and met everybody in the world and it is fascinating to listen to him. He met Norma Shearer and he said he thought she was the prettiest thing he had ever seen. What he said was "I did think she was the prettiest girl in the world, till today." I was going to pretend I didn't get it, but I finally told him to be sensible or I would never be able to believe anything he said.

Well, he wanted me to dance with him tonight after dinner and the next question was how to explain how we had met each other to Uncle Nat and Aunt Jule. Frank said he would fix that all right and sure enough he got himself introduced to Uncle Nat when Uncle Nat came in from golf and after dinner Uncle Nat introduced him to me and Aunt Jule too and we danced together all evening, that is not Aunt Jule. They went to bed, thank heavens.

He is a heavenly dancer, as good as Gordon. One dance we were dancing and for one of the encores the orchestra played "In a cottage small by a waterfall" and I simply couldn't dance to it. I just stopped still and said "Listen, I can't bear it, I can't breathe" and poor Frank thought I was sick or something and I had to explain that that was the tune the orchestra played the night I sat at the next table to Jack Barrymore at Barney Gallant's.

I made him sit out that encore and wouldn't let him talk till they got through playing it. Then they played something else and I was all right again and Frank told me about meeting Jack Barrymore. Imagine meeting him. I couldn't live.

I promised Aunt Jule I would go to bed at eleven and it is way past that now, but I am all ready for bed and have just been writing this. Tomorrow Gordon is going to call up and what will I say to him? I just won't think about it.

July 14

Gordon called up this morning from Chicago and it was wonderful to hear his voice again though the connection was terrible. He asked me if I still loved him and I tried to tell him no, but I knew that would mean an explanation and the connection was so bad that I never could make him understand so I said yes, but I almost whispered it purposely, thinking he wouldn't hear me, but he heard me all right and he said that made everything all right with the world. He said he thought I had stopped loving him because I had stopped writing.

I wish the connection had been decent and I could have told him how things were, but now it is terrible because he is planning to get to New York the day I get there and heaven knows what I will do because Walter will be there, too. I just won't think about it.

Aunt Jule came in my room just after I was through talking to Gordon, thank heavens. The room was full of flowers. Walter had sent me some

and so had Frank. I got another long night letter from Walter, just as silly as the first one. I wish he would say those things in letters instead of night letters so everybody in the world wouldn't see them. Aunt Jule wanted me to read it aloud to her. I would have died.

While she was still in the room, Frank called up and asked me to play golf with him and I said all right and Aunt Jule said she was glad my headache was gone. She was trying to be funny.

I played golf with Frank this afternoon. He is a beautiful golfer and it is thrilling to watch him drive, his swing is so much more graceful than Walter's. I asked him to watch me swing and tell me what was the matter with me, but he said he couldn't look at anything but my face and there wasn't anything the matter with that.

He told me the boy who was here with him had been called home and he was glad of it because I might have liked him, the other boy, better than himself. I told him that couldn't be possible and he asked me if I really meant that and I said of course, but I smiled when I said it so he wouldn't take it too seriously.

We danced again tonight and Uncle Nat and Aunt Jule sat with us a while and danced a couple of dances themselves, but they were really there to get better acquainted with Frank and see if he was all right for me to be with. I know they certainly couldn't have enjoyed their own dancing, no old people really can enjoy it because they can't really *do* anything.

They were favorably impressed with Frank I think, at least Aunt Jule didn't say I must be in bed at eleven, but just not to stay up too late. I guess it is a big surprise to a girl's parents and aunts and uncles to find out that the boys you go around with are all right, they always seem to think that if I seem to like somebody and the person pays a little attention to me, why he must be a convict or a policeman or a drunkard or something queer.

Frank had some more songs for me tonight. He asked me if I knew the asthma song and I said I didn't and he said "Oh, you must know that. It goes yes, sir, asthma baby." Then he told me about the underwear song, "I underwear my baby is tonight." He keeps you in hysterics and yet he has his serious side, in fact he was awfully serious when he said good night to me and his eyes simply shown. I wish Walter were more like him in some ways, but I mustn't think about that.

July 15

I simply can't live and I know I'll never sleep tonight. I am in a terrible predicament or rather I won't know whether I really am or not till tomorrow and that is what makes it so terrible.

After we had danced two or three dances, Frank asked me to go for a ride with him and we went for a ride in his car and he had had some cocktails and during the ride he had some drinks out of a flask and finally he told me he loved me and I said not to be silly, but he said he was perfectly serious and he certainly acted that way. He asked me if I loved anybody else and I said yes and he asked if I didn't love him more than anybody else and I said yes,

but only because I thought he had probably had too much to drink and wouldn't remember it anyway and the best thing to do was humor him under the circumstances.

Then all of a sudden he asked me when I could marry him and I said, just as a joke, that I couldn't possibly marry him before December. He said that was a long time to wait, but I was certainly worth waiting for and he said a lot of other things and maybe I humored him a little too much, but that is just the trouble, I don't know.

I was absolutely sure he was tight and would forget the whole thing, but that was early in the evening, and when we said good night he was a whole lot more sober than he had been and now I am not sure how it stands. If he doesn't remember anything about it, of course I am all right. But if he does remember and if he took me seriously, I will simply have to tell him about Walter and maybe about Gordon, too. And it isn't going to be easy. The suspense is what is maddening and I know I'll never live through this night.

July 16

I can't stand it, I can't breathe, life is impossible. Frank remembered everything about last night and firmly believes we are engaged and going to be married in December. His people live in New York and he says he is going back when I do and have them meet me.

Of course it can't go on and tomorrow I will tell him about Walter or Gordon or both of them. I know it is going to hurt him terribly, perhaps spoil his life and I would give anything in the world not to have had it happen. I hate so to hurt him because he is so nice besides being so cute and attractive.

He sent me the loveliest flowers this morning and called up at ten and wanted to know how soon he could see me and I hope the girl wasn't listening in because the things he said were, well, like Walter's night letters.

And that is another terrible thing, today I didn't get a night letter from Walter, but there was a regular letter instead and I carried it around in my purse all this afternoon and evening and never remembered to read it till ten minutes ago when I came up in the room. Walter is worried because I have only sent him two telegrams and written him one letter since I have been here, he would be a lot more worried if he knew what has happened now, though of course it can't make any difference because he is the one I am really engaged to be married to and the one I told mother I was going to marry in December and I wouldn't dare tell her it was somebody else.

I met Frank for lunch and we went for a ride this afternoon and he was so much in love and so lovely to me that I simply did not have the heart to tell him the truth, I am surely going to tell him tomorrow and telling him today would have just meant one more day of unhappiness for both of us.

He said his people had plenty of money and his father had offered to take him into partnership and he might accept, but he thinks his true vocation is journalism with a view to eventually writing novels and if I was willing to undergo a few hardships just at first we would probably both be happier later

on if he was doing something he really liked. I didn't know what to say, but finally I said I wanted him to suit himself and money wasn't everything.

He asked me where I would like to go on my honeymoon and I suppose I ought to have told him my honeymoon was all planned, that I was going to California, with Walter, but all I said was that I had always wanted to go to California and he was enthusiastic and said that is where we would surely go and he would take me to Hollywood and introduce me to all those wonderful people he met there last winter. It nearly takes my breath away to think of it, going there with someone who really knows people and has the entrée.

We danced again tonight, just two or three dances, and then went out and sat in the tennis-court, but I came upstairs early because Aunt Jule had acted kind of funny at dinner. And I wanted to be alone, too, and think, but the more I think the worse it gets.

Sometimes I wish I were dead, maybe that is the only solution and it would be best for everyone concerned. I *will* die if things keep on the way they have been. But of course tomorrow it will be all over, with Frank I mean, for I must tell him the truth no matter how much it hurts us both. Though I don't care how much it hurts me. The thought of hurting him is what is driving me mad. I can't bear it.

July 18

I have skipped a day. I was busy every minute of yesterday and so exhausted when I came upstairs that I was tempted to fall into bed with all my clothes on. First Gordon called me up from Chicago to remind me that he would be in New York the day I got there and that when he comes he wants me all to himself all the time and we can make plans for our wedding. The connection was bad again and I just couldn't explain to him about Walter.

I had an engagement with Frank for lunch and just as we were going in another long distance call came, from Walter this time. He wanted to know why I haven't written more letters and sent him more telegrams and asked me if I still loved him and of course I told him yes because I really do. Then he asked if I had met any men here and I told him I had met one, a friend of Uncle Nat's. After all it was Uncle Nat who introduced me to Frank. He reminded me that he would be in New York on the 25th which is the day I expect to get home, and said he would have theater tickets for that night and we would go somewhere afterwards and dance.

Frank insisted on knowing who had kept me talking so long and I told him it was a boy I had known a long while, a very dear friend of mine and a friend of my family's. Frank was jealous and kept asking questions till I thought I would go mad. He was so serious and kind of cross and gruff that I gave up the plan of telling him the truth till some time when he is in better spirits.

I played golf with Frank in the afternoon and we took a ride last night and I wanted to get in early because I had promised both Walter and Gordon that I would write them long letters, but Frank wouldn't bring me back to the Inn till I had named a definite date in December. I finally told him the

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roth and he said all right if I was sure that wasn't a Sunday. I said I would have to look it up, but as a matter of fact I know the roth falls on a Friday because the date Walter and I have agreed on for our wedding is Saturday the 11th.

Today has just been the same thing over again, two more night letters, a long distance call from Chicago, golf and a ride with Frank, and the room full of flowers. But tomorrow I am going to tell Frank and I am going to write Gordon a long letter and tell him, too, because this simply can't go on any longer. I can't breathe. I can't live.

July 21

I wrote to Gordon yesterday, but I didn't say anything about Walter because I don't think it is a thing a person ought to do by letter. I can tell him when he gets to New York and then I will be sure that he doesn't take it too hard and I can promise him that I will be friends with him always and make him promise not to do anything silly, while if I told it to him in a letter there is no telling what he would do, there all alone.

And I haven't told Frank because he hasn't been feeling well, he is terribly sunburned and it hurts him terribly so he can hardly play golf or dance, and I want him to be feeling his best when I do tell him, but whether he is all right or not I simply must tell him tomorrow because he is actually planning to leave here on the same train with us Saturday night and I can't let him do that.

Life is so hopeless and it could be so wonderful. For instance how heavenly it would be if I could marry Frank first and stay married to him five years and he would be the one who would take me to Hollywood and maybe we could go on parties with Norman Kerry and Jack Barrymore and Buster Collier and Marion Davies and Lois Moran.

And at the end of five years Frank could go into journalism and write novels and I would only be 23 and I could marry Gordon and he would be ready for another trip around the world and he could show me things better than someone who had never seen them before.

Gordon and I would separate at the end of five years and I would be 28 and I know of lots of women that never even got married the first time till they were 28 though I don't suppose that was their fault, but I would marry Walter then, for after all he is the one I really love and want to spend most of my life with and I wouldn't care whether he could dance or not when I was that old. Before long we would be as old as Uncle Nat and Aunt Julia and I certainly wouldn't want to dance at their age when all you can do is just hobble around the floor. But Walter is so wonderful as a companion, and we would enjoy the same things and be pals and maybe we would begin to have children.

But that is all impossible though it wouldn't be if older people just had sense and would look at things the right way.

It is only half past ten, the earliest I have gone to bed in weeks, but I am

worn out and Frank went to bed early so he could put cold cream on his sunburn.

Listen, diary, the orchestra is playing "Limehouse Blues." The first tune I danced to with Merle Oliver, two years ago. I can't stand it. And how funny that they should play that old tune tonight of all nights, when I have been thinking of Merle off and on all day, and I hadn't thought of him before in weeks and weeks. I wonder where he is, I wonder if it is just an accident or if it means I am going to see him again. I simply mustn't think about it or I'll die.

July 22

I knew it wasn't an accident. I knew it must mean something, and it did.

Merle is coming here today, here to this Inn, and just to see me. And there can only be one reason. And only one answer. I knew that when I heard his voice calling from Boston. How could I ever had thought I loved anyone else? How could he ever have thought I meant it when I told him I was engaged to George Morse?

A whole year and he still cares and I still care. That shows we were always intended for each other and for no one else. I won't make *him* wait till December. I doubt if we even wait till dad and mother get home. And as for a honeymoon I will go with him to Long Beach or the Bronx Zoo, wherever he wants to take me.

After all this is the best way out of it, the only way. I won't have to say anything to Frank, he will guess when he sees me with Merle. And when I get home Sunday and Walter and Gordon call me up, I will invite them both to dinner and Merle can tell them himself, with two of them there it will only hurt each one half as much as if they were alone.

The train is due at 2:40, almost three hours from now. I can't wait. And what if it should be late? I can't stand it.

LOVE'S BITTER MYSTERY¹

by Thomas Beer

You cad," said Lakme, and struck him on the nose. "You cad!" He stepped back twice with a faint, soft snort and his white sailor's clothes became a dimness in the high shadow of the scrub oak bush. Directly Mrs. Pruger began to wail from somewhere in the muddle of strolling masqueraders, "Lakme! Daughter darling! Lak-me!" and the girl cowered away from the lantern spinning slowly on a strand of wire above this covert of glossy bushes.

¹ From *The Saturday Evening Post*, November 7, 1925, by permission of the author.

"Daughter darling," her mother musically howled from the lawn, "it's almost time for you to dance, dear!"

Young Helmuth passed a hand over his nose. His black mask was pushed up on his forehead, but it seemed to leak drops of dye that spotted his blouse suddenly, and a black mustache was, as suddenly, created on his naked upper lip. Perhaps blood altered under a green light to black. Yes, that was it; just as her pink dress was purple in the play last winter when the blue light came on its flutter at the end of her scene. A curious chill circled Lakme's neck. She had broken his nose, and he might sue her for damages and mother would be cross. It was a nice, straight nose; he would resent it, all mashed and flattened.

"W-will you marry me?"

Lakme said, "Pardon?" and glared at the tall young man in the white clothes that showed once more as he stepped from the shadow of the brushwood. He wanted to marry her!

"W-won't you marry me, Miss Pruger?"

"My name's really Sanford," said Lakme, crazily twisting her ankles together; "Mr. Pruger's my stepfather—second. Mother's been married three times. You don't really want to marry me?"

"Really," Helmuth told her lugubriously, rubbing his nose with a sleeve. "It's why I kissed you, Miss Stanford."

"Sanford," said Lakme idly. "That's awf'ly nice of you. Yes, that's awf'ly nice. Only it wouldn't do. I was engaged to a man last summer only mother started sponging on him at once, you see, and I hated him anyhow, and we broke it off. Only, even if I liked a man it wouldn't do. Mother'd sponge on him so! Thank you very much, of course."

She had not been able to stop her voice from rattling all this out in an ugly, dry ticking, as though a clock had gone mad.

Meanwhile her mother bawled in the rich contralto that always pleased strangers: "Lak-me! Daughter darling!" and the sound approached this lump of tall oak brush with its melodious threat.

"I don't care about your mother," said Helmuth; "I l-love you."

"Isn't any such thing as love," the girl chattered. "Just an illusion! I'm pretty and my legs are beautiful when I dance. Very few women have dimples in their knees unless their weight's getting the best of 'em. You don't love me. Sorry about your nose."

Mrs. Pruger's howl arose, close at hand. Lakme turned and ran around the corner of the shingled hall. No, she couldn't dance tonight, even if her contract with The Inn on The Dunes called for special dances. She was a floating bundle of heats and aches, and her throat was somehow freezing between her shaking chin and the immense pain that was her chest. Her bare feet slipped about in oozy grass and some low vine flicked a trailer among her toes.

"Listen, to me," said Helmuth behind her shoulders. "I d-do love you!"

I d-don't care about your mother! She's impossible, of course, and I want to get you away from her."

"On a cash basis," Lakme coughed, "you could. Honesty's the best policy. Yes, for about ten thousand cash. Only it wouldn't last her long. She gambles. 'Bout a year and she'd be sitting on the front steps asking for more. Good night!"

"I l-love," the young man said, wiping his nose, "you."

"The pause was effective," Lakme chattered. "No! Don't try to kiss me again! Please! It's no good, I tell you! You're nice, and I rather like you, and you swim beautifully, but I couldn't marry you! Wouldn't be humane. I'm nineteen and I know what I'm doing."

He took hold of her arm and held her back from the first step of flight. He was very strong; on the beach his fair, tanless arms showed long ribbons of muscle that never quite stilled themselves.

"When did you start dancing?"

"I was fourteen," she said, "out in California. Mother had me dance at a ghastly hotel in Coronado. My first stepfather taught dancing. And then she married Mr. Pruger—who really isn't a bad sort—and he got me a job in that show last winter. He was dancing in it himself. And you saw me revolting and thought you loved me. Well, 'turn aside and brood no more upon love's bitter mystery.' You don't give a rap about me."

"I l-love you," the young man mentioned, gripping her arm. "Trust me!"

"Don't stutter so," said Lakme, and shut her teeth.

Somewhere close to her a person dressed as a Chinaman told a vague woman, "Little Lakme's going to leap awhile before supper."

The vague woman drawled, "No afflictions are spared us! This is certainly the dullest masquerade I ever saw."

"Well, what can you expect at places like this?" the Chinaman yawned. "Anyhow, Americans haven't the masquerading temperament. Let's go down and look at the bally old ocean."

"I hate the seaside," said the woman, and strolled off with her Chinaman, a fluttering vagueness still, in a shawl sprinkled with sequins. The moon benevolently made her robe phosphorescent, passing over blue turf down the slope toward the beach.

"I love you," Helmuth said in his heavy barytone.

"My hair's bleached," Lakme told him; "mother thinks it makes me look cunning that way. Wouldn't your highly respectable family love watching it turn black again? And would you mind telling me again where you come from?"

"Poughkeepsie, New York. And my family has nothing to do with this," he snarled again. "Go get dressed! We'll have Kid Smith drive us to Boston or somewhere and get married."

"Who the hell's Kid Smith?"

He shook her arm viciously and ordered, "Don't swear like that! He runs the garage—owns it."

"'Turn aside and brood no more,'" Lakme gabbled, "'upon love's bitter mystery.' What book's that out of? Or is it from Shakespeare? Poor man! He spent his life writing quotations."

In a moment she would faint or scream. A dark boy dressed in a single flare of crimson drapery that belted his brown body from chest to thighs strolled past this corner and Helmuth said, "Run along Kid," in a vexed voice.

"Yeh," said the boy softly, and went roaming down the grass, as a fresh waltz broke out from the cleared dining room of the inn.

"I'm tired of having my arm bruised," Lakme whimpered.

"I l-love you," Helmuth said. "Listen, Lakme, I——"

"How alliterative! 'Listen, Lakme.' No," the girl sobbed, "it's no good! Please, Jimmy! I can't marry you! Mother'd make our lives a burden! She would indeed! F-father was a gentleman. He was a master at Eton. Used to take me in to the opera—Covent Garden. That's really all I remember about him."

"It's not very interesting," said Helmuth. "Let me have the Kid run us in to Boston or somewhere we can get married. I'll make your mother an allowance. Please!"

She remembered a girl in blue, vibrating in the vast cube of a lighted stage. It was an opera that had made her cry all the way home to Eton. The girl died because a sorcerer made her sing.

"It's curious how one forgets the names of plays, operas and things like that. Last night in bed I was trying to think of the stations between Eton and London."

"I love you," said Helmuth, shaking her arm.

"What of it? Love's just an illusion—what a rotten band this is here!—an illusion! Pruger's tired of mother already, and they were married New Year's Day. She spends all his money, and talks down to him. His father's a tradesman out in Nevada or Seattle or one of those states."

"I love you," he said, and kissed her shoulder.

Lakme broke from his hand, and ran with reflections of the great silver roses on her tunic flashing along the turf. Masqueraders scattered on the oblong lawn of the inn and, remotely, some man yelled, "Looka Lakme leapin'!" as she ran, with the Atlantic Ocean noisy on her right and black cottages morose on the left horizon. The moonlight surged on every hand and whitened the shingle of some building ahead. The band chased her with the rhythm of a waltz and she heard innumerable feet chasing her, too, to bring her back to her mother and make her dance, so that the boys who called her "Leaping Lakme" might have something to laugh at. She gulped tremendously and went darting toward a long shed whose shingles were cream in the beating moonlight.

"Hey, Lakme!"

The man got in her way and spread black arms. She slowed and recognized her stepfather with a kind of relief; the night had gone insane with its spinning moon and its fierce kisses. Nels Pruger was always calm.

"Where you goin', sister?"

"Nowhere. You may as well go and tell mother I shan't dance tonight. I'm fed up—sick of it! And nobody wants to see me dance anyhow, Nels!"

"You ain't so far wrong, sister," Pruger drawled, imperturbably assuming the pose of a handsome advertisement for dinner jackets, his arms crossed on his chest. "No. A person that don't enjoy dancing can't make nobody else enjoy it neither."

"Anybody else, Nels," the girl mumbled.

"Yeh? 'At's so," said the dancing man, unvexed, and looked up at the moon, which colored his fair curls green, and kindly hid the scar under one eye. He was now excessively beautiful, unjaded and slim in his black clothes, with one bright shoe tapping the grass. The waltz, far away, died and revived on puffs of a south wind that whipped Lakme's tunic against her aching knees. Pruger whistled three bars of another tune and then said, "I'm quittin', sister."

"What, Nels?"

"It's like this," her stepfather went on: "Jake Rosebloom's got Boys and Girls down at Atlantic City, ready to open. Ed Delaney—he has three dances in the show—goes and busts his leg. Jake wired for me. Got to get down there tomorrow night—last rehearsal. Just borrowed fifty off Kid Smith, here."

"Who's Kid Smith, Nels?"

"The kid that owns the garage. Used to know him in vaud'ville," Pruger explained. "His uncle minds him, these days, and gave him this garage here. He was always mechanical. R'member him helpin' mend a trick automobile out in Frisco once—— Well, that ain't what I was talkin' about."

"So you're going to Atlantic City to dance in a new show," Lakme said after a while, with an iced ball joggling in her throat.

"You're going to marry that Helmuth boy, sister?"

"No," she whimpered, "I can't, Nels! It wouldn't be humane! I told him so. I hit him on the nose, and then he asked me to marry him, and there was blood on his lip—— Mother would come and live with—on us. I can't do it, Nels. Love's just an illusion anyhow."

The dancing man drawled in his monotonous voice, "My folks have been married thirty-three years, but that's out in Seattle. Don't be a fool, Lakme. This Helmuth fella ain't good lookin', but he's a gentleman and don't gin up. Kid Smith wrote home to his brother in Poughkeepsie that you was here. His brother tells the Helmuth boy, accidentally, and he comes on the run and been here six weeks, now. Take your luck. His folks make bathtubs, and the Kid says they're good people—and you're crazy about him."

The vulgar sentence stiffened her. Lakme put both palms on her throat and watched a forlorn tan cloud quench the moon. Grass dulled and the lamps festooned on the dining hall increased their power in the gloom. Cigarettes of strolling masqueraders were depraved fireflies, and the ocean pounded heavily in time to the waltz. Well, she was crazy about Jimmy

Helmuth. Everybody knew it at the inn. It must be a casual topic among four hundred boarders and cottagers. He sat and scowled when she did her dances three nights a week.

"I can't marry him! Who'd look after mother, Nels? You're leaving her, aren't you?"

"I'll send her twenty-five a week," he declared, "and the flat's paid for until the first of January. She can have it. I'll stop on my way to Atlantic City and clean my stuff out. The furniture's hers anyway. Yeh, I'm done with Annabel, sister!"

She should rage at him for her mother's sake, and call him names, but she stood wondering how many stepfathers might follow Pruger. He was giving notice. Ladislav Pranov had merely left the flat one morning. Memorials of his tenancy still appeared. Cigarette holders and the iron rings that he wore for some Russian reason were found wedged in the stuffed chairs.

"I'm through," said Pruger sullenly, "and you'd better be, Sister Lakme. Got any money left?"

"About eighty dollars, Nels. Mother doesn't know it."

"It's why you've got it," he said, uselessly informative. "Snakes! I was gettin' two hundred all winter and you were gettin' a hundred a week. Now look at us, dancin' for board and keep in a summer hotel! No, I'm through with Annabel! And you'd better be, Lakme."

The girl said, "Oh, that's impossible, Nels. She's my mother. One can't desert. She has no way of making money, and she only has fifty pounds a year. But I shan't dance again this winter, Nels, because I really can't stand it. I hate it! I haven't that temperament. I don't like being stared at. I'll find something else."

"You'll marry this Helmuth boy and go live in Poughkeepsie, like a lady. Yes, you will, Lakme," the dancing man insisted, "an' I'll tell you why too. I wasn't goin' to do this, but if you won't be sensible, I'll have to. You've got all this loyalty, an' kind of sentiment about your mother bein' your mother. Well, how's she treat you? Does she turn a hand? No! She just absorbs every damn cent you make. Why did that Russian fella quit her?"

"I don't know— Oh, well, it was money," Lakme sighed; "I know it was. She never told me so, but I know it. It's dreadful! We've been in the States ten years, but she never learns where to shop, or anything. The money just goes through her hands. She's a baby about it!"

Pruger gave a sudden laugh of four hard notes. Paper rattled in the profound shadows of the moist night. All the wind had died with the clouds upon the moon and a mosquito bit Lakme's right knee sharply.

"Here, take this an' read it when you get a chance, sister. And, so long too. I'll be gone when you get up in the morning. You're an awful sweet kid, Lakme. Been a pleasure to know you. Anything I can ever do for you, let me——"

"Oh, thanks! Thanks ever so," said Lakme, limply holding the paper he

had pressed into her hand. "You're very kind. And I hope the show's a success."

He drifted into the immense darkness that seemed thicker all about her with people laughing a hundred yards away, and the spattered lights of the dining hall alluring. The ocean bumped on the sand a hundred times, and a mosquito fairly yelled around her head. This was the end of Pruger. Oh, poor fellow! How decent he had been! How frightfully decent! She thought in words, very slowly. Not a gentleman. No. But so much kinder than other people, and so patient about things. She began to cry freshly and her tears were curiously shaken on her shoulders. She seemed to cry in all directions.

"Rainin'," a male said softly, close to her.

"Have the goodness," Lakme told him, "t-to leave me alone!"

"Yeh," the man said amiably, the chin and wide red mouth of his bronze face appearing in the pulse of his cigarette's end, "'s fine night f' turtles."

"I beg your pardon?"

"It's a fine night for turtles," the dark person murmured. "C'mon in the g'rage, girl."

"I certainly shall not go into the garage," Lakme raved, crumpling the paper against her breast. "How dare you? I don't even know you!"

"Yeh, y'do. My name's C. Smith. Jimmy Helmuth int'duced us. Yeh," C. Smith said in his leisurely murmur, "c'mon, Jane."

"My name doesn't happen to be Jane. It's Lakme San——"

"Mine's worse," he assured her; "Casimir. Yeh! You're a baby an' they do it to y'—Casimir. Mamma was a Polack. 'S tough on a fella. When I'm twenty-one I can change it. Gonna be sump'n human. Casimir!"

"That is rather awful," Lakme assented, stuffing the paper in her frock's upper tightness. "Yes, I think that's rather vile! Mr. Helmuth did introduce you to me, didn't he? You swim so remarkably and look as though you were made of brown rubber. Y-you don't happen to know where Jimmy—Mr. Helmuth is, do you?"

"Yeh," said Casimir Smith, "'s room. Stuffin' cotton up his nose, girl. You banged him hard—for a she. Y'gotta marry Jim," he went on affably. "'S nice fella. Know'm home. M'brother built's folks' new fact'ry. 'S good guy. Weighs hundred eighty. Boxes pret' fair. No good wrestlin'. Nice house. Swimmin' pool. G'rage. Two cars. Flowers. 'S mamma's dead. Yeh, an' his pop hears bad. 'S nice fam'ly. Y'gonna marry him?"

"Aren't you rather impertinent, Mr. Smith?"

"Yeh," said the dark boy, blowing smoke through his nose dimly. "Gonna take the guy? Loves y'. Sits up all night an' tells me. Yeh! Awful slush. 'S funny. Love."

"It's not funny! It's frightfully serious!"

"Yeh? 'S gonna be serious if you don't take Jimmy," Mr. Smith observed. "He'll bust."

Lakme shivered. Her gauzes were soaked and water hunted dry spots on

her back. Even the dark youth behind his cigarette was warmer, with his wrapping of heavy silks.

"You're dressed as a South Sea Islander, aren't you?"

"Yeh. Gonna take Jimmy?"

"Please don't," said Lakme drearily, and sneezed. "It—it's a private matter. I can't discuss it with you."

"Y'old woman——"

"Please don't speak of my mother in that tone!"

"Useda be in vaudeville," said Mr. Smith.

"She was not," cried Lakme. "How ever can you say such a thing? She was never in vaudeville! She was a Lacy from Devonsh——"

"I," Casimir Smith said, "useda be in vaudeville. Yeh! Two—three hundred—four hundred a week. The Divin' Kid. Ate apples und' water. Glass tank. Fancy swimmin'. County fairs, beaches, summer. Yeh, only pop managed me. Yeh. Blew all m'coin on dames an' hooch. Useda hafta mend m'own socks. Yeh! 'N' m'broth' lost's leg. France. Sergeant. Infantry. 'N' m'old man never gave him nothin'. Yeh! Lousy ape. Blood's thicker'n soup. Gotta stick to y'old woman?" The murmurous question slid upward into a jeer. Lakme cringed. After a wet moment Mr. Smith said, "Fat head!" and spat aside his cigarette. It did not hiss, dying in the wet grass. She was left in darkness with this stranger who'd been in vaudeville. He was horribly vulgar; he should be rebuked; he called her mother names. But a hot confusion was in Lakme's head, and she suffered from an image of a vast stage with a girl in blue singing desperately because a sorcerer forced her to sing, dying slenderly in a man's arms.

"I'm trying so hard to think of the name of an opera. Father used to bring me in to matinées at Covent Garden. He died when I was nine. There's this opera. A girl has to sing, in the last act—and dies of it."

"Yeh. Tales'v Hoffman," Casimir Smith said. He miraculously lighted a match and appeared in the flare, the brown polish of his shoulders interrupted by the straps of a red bath shirt that underlay his silken drapery. His black hair was matting down to a ragged point over great black eyes set above high bones in the flat bronze of his face. He fired a new cigarette and let rain put the match out, then asked, "Gonna stick to y'old woman, girl?"

Her mother swung far away from the girl, in this tormented darkness. It was strange, mysterious, but for weeks Annabel Pruger had been retiring. She was, somehow, less potently lovely and it didn't matter so much that she had violet eyes and that all the women cooed over her frocks. Love's bitter mystery. Love's bitter—— Oh, stop thinking!

"Gonna go on workin' f' y'old woman, Lak?"

"H-how dare you?"

"Fat head," said Casimir Smith, with amiable patience. "Y'all lame in y'brains. Go on working for your old woman"—his voice was suddenly distinct—"an' lose your looks. What's she care about you, girl? Not a thing! Y'bein' all loyal an' all that. Yeh, blood's thicker'n water. They tell y'that

and then they blow y'pay on 'emselves. World's full of 'em, Jane. Here she comes. S'long."

Melodiously wistful, the voice of Annabel Pruger came through the rain from an advancing glow, crying "Lakme! Dearest!" and her daughter saw the beryl gown's tremendous skirt caged in light under a monstrous umbrella from the tea garden.

"Oh, d-don't go!"

"Yeh? Kinda scared of y'old woman?"

"No. Yes!" Lakme whined. "But please don't go, Mr. Casimir! I——"

The lantern under the umbrella flung forward a dappled light on white shingles of the long shed beside them and the dark lad's wrapping showed its splotches of rain. Annabel Pruger said with satisfaction, thirty yards away, "There she is!" and a pirate, all red kerchiefs and burnt-cork mustaches, whooped, "Yo ho, and a bottla gin!" tossing the lantern to and fro as he marched with a male gypsy and a Russian dancer who lugged the umbrella.

"Dearest, what are you doing here?"

"Talking to Mr. Smith, mother."

Casimir Smith sat on his heels and linked heavy arms around his knees, studying Mrs. Pruger and her gallants. The fantastic woman surged grandly down the slope of grass, her hooped skirt drifting and her slim throat delicately lustrous in a burden of false gems.

"She's all wet," said the pirate in the tone of mental effort, inanely beaming upon Lakme; "'s wet on the river tonight."

"Do run very quickly, my darling, and get to bed! It's such a stupid dance that you're missing nothing. I never saw such a dull masquerade, although they're usually dull." She touched her child's shoulder with pink nails and drawled, "The only decent masquerade I ever saw was quite impromptu. It was at Fennel Court one night. The dear place was full of old things—trunks full of clothes. Lady Gateleigh let me wear some most hideous jewels that belonged to Queen Elizabeth's cook or someone frightfully important."

"Yes," Lakme thought, "chuck it at them! Fennel Court was in last Sunday's papers. An American's bought it. Chuck it at them! They never stayed in an earl's country house and they're impressed. Chuck it at them! They'll drop in at the flat next winter for cocktails and ask you to dine. Chuck it at them! I'm so tired of hearing you do that."

"Water," the lovely woman drawled to Casimir Smith, "seems to be your native element. You were a professional swimmer in vaudeville, Nels tells me."

"Yeh. H'red'ty," he murmured, flapping his hair back from his eyes. "Mamma was Helena, th' Human Seal. Yeh. I was th' Divin' Kid. Only m'old man hogged all the coin. Yeh, an' he lived off mamma 'ntil she died, 'n' then he lived offa me'n' m'brother."

"Then you can't really have cared about vaudeville," Mrs. Pruger gently said, in a flat pause.

"Didn't mind. Only pop useda get married a lot," the retired Diving Kid

explained, balancing his cigarette on a wrist. "Blondes. 'N' they'd get tired workin' f' th' lousy old ape'n' quit him. Handsome mush. 'S in jail now. Beats up 's wife. Yeh!"

"What a distressing parent!"

"Yeh. Useda be. 'S fine now. He can't come an' 'noy m'broth' f' coin. 'S fine," the boy said, his eyes oddly yellow in the light. He flipped his cigarette into his mouth and rose without any effort, smiling. "S'long."

He bobbed his black head and flitted into the wide door of his garage. The lantern chased his gleaming legs past lined motors. Lakme saw the blue sheen of Helmuth's car and lost her hearing for a breath, then knew that the male gypsy was talking. ". . . Astonishing swimmer! And he knows everything about a car. He's quite a character."

"He's a beautiful brute enough," said Mrs. Pruger, "but what a cynic!"

"Why?"

"Ah. Being glad that his father's in jail! I can't quite stand that. It's rather ghastly. Dearest Lakme, how wet you are!" The scent of violets floated from the silver laces of her breast and she poised a hand on the girl's shoulder, smiling down: "Do run along!"

The male gypsy settled his spectacles on his nose, coughed and said: "I think I question your definition of cynicism. What we call cynicism is merely—as a general thing—the expression of a commonplace experience of life. The boy loathed his father. His father's in jail and he rather honestly admits that he's glad of it."

"But one shouldn't want one's father in jail," Mrs. Pruger sighed; "that's quite unbearable!"

The Russian dancer hitched his gilded suspenders closer to his beaded trunks and lisped, "Tho wath his father." Then sneezed as rain cascaded suddenly from a side of the umbrella.

"But, at least," said Annabel Pruger, "one shouldn't tell strangers about it! When I'm in England again I'll be simply stunned when people in railway carriages don't tell me their private history five minutes after the first remark. You've no reticence, as a nation. One shouldn't wash one's dirty linen on the pavements!" She laughed in her long, delicious gurgle and then drawled, "This isn't quite the place for a chat on manners, is it? Ah, but blood's thicker than water!"

"Lots of water," said the pirate, emptily staring into the garage.

Lakme trotted up the grass, her hands locked on the paper in her breast. Yes, but she had to tell Jimmy about her mother! That was love. It made you want to lie frightfully about yourself, or to tell the truth altogether. She had to break down all manners and tell the truth, and there had been a relief in it too! Because he didn't like her mother and that had followed. He was fearfully honest! He admitted that he hated music, and didn't like cropped hair, even on her. And for six weeks he hadn't tried to make love at all, but talked scornfully of her golf and advised her to use dumb-bells because her wrists were too thin for her arms.

"Li'l drink, Lakme?"

"No, thanks," she said, dodging past a group in the veranda, surrounding a silver flask.

"Well, for an actress," a woman raw with sunburn cawed, "you're certainly the——"

Lakme bounced over the doorsill and into a hallway painted orange. She scuttled up the stairs and kicked open the door of her room. She would be out of the inn tomorrow. If Jimmy wanted to, she would leave with him in the morning. Casimir Smith should drive them to Boston. How funny to be married in Boston! And to a man with ginger freckles all over his jaw and feet that were a foot long. She tore down the rags of her soaked gauzes and threw the corpse of the garment into a corner beside her mother's second largest trunk. That was that! And she would never wear one of the things again! And there would be no rehearsals for Melville Schimmel's new revue on the first of September, and no more whirling about on a chilly stage before fifteen hundred people who didn't care, and no more luncheons in smart restaurants where some voice from another table would be heard asking if that wasn't the girl who danced in the show the other night, Bill. Lakme involved herself in a huge bath towel and spun for ten steps along the narrow cell, remembering how Pranov had taught her to prance ecstatically on the shore at Carmel, out in California, six years ago. He must have saved quite a bit toward that villa outside Cannes that he wanted for his old age. By getting rid of her mother he had effected a fine stroke of economy. "Ah, *voleuse!*" he yelled at his wife in one of their last quarrels. And, really, mother was a thief—not that she meant to be, but it came to that, didn't it? You gave her forty dollars and she came back with some flimsy undergarment that you could buy for five in a department store, if you went hunting anywhere but on Fifth Avenue, or a childish cushion rimmed in gold lace. The voice of Pranov returned, "I giff you six ondred dollar and, *mon Dieu!* you spend her all on pillows!" He had been very nasty about money, truly, and not humorously patient, like Nels Pruger, and yet he had lasted three years from the wedding in Los Angeles to the vanishment in New York. And Nels was quitting after six months.

Lakme hauled on her mother's last year's dressing gown—ninety dollars when it was new, and a girl in the show last winter wore its sister which she found in Grand Street for fifteen. Folds of frayed pink tissue enveloped her browned legs as she curled on the end of her deplorable bed. There was the ugliest sound in married people's voices when they quarreled about money, as if the vulgar subject made their throats vulgar too.

If Jimmy didn't make her mother an allowance, what would become of Mrs. Pruger, born Annabel Lacy, widow of Cyril Henry George Sanford, M. A., and more recently, by order of court, of Ladislav Pranov, prospectively of Nels Pruger? She had been able for weeks to think of her mother in a curiously cold fashion, as if being in love with Jimmy made her mother less important, something of a stranger. It was a horribly new sensation. It might

be love's bitter mystery. Yes, that was probably the bitter side of love. You fell out of love with other people because you were in love with a man whose freckles were the color of ginger. For weeks she'd been able to see her mother just as one saw anybody else, a figure parading a little stage in the mind—an irritating and silly person when she asked five dollars to settle a debt at bridge or talked of running over to England for the autumn. Mrs. Pruger swung far away from her daughter, and even her voice in the hallway was presently to be criticized as it called "Darling!"

Yes, it was too sweet, too drawling, and its music cloyed.

"What is it, mother?"

"You're quite all right? You've not taken cold?"

"Oh, quite all right, dear," said Lakme, and then shivered as the door's latch clicked. She didn't want to see her mother or to smell that exhalation of violet from the trailing clothes. The door was opening, though, and she said anxiously, "Needn't bother, mother. Go on back and dance some more."

"Such an abysmally, primordially, horribly dull dance," Annabel Pruger drawled, with a lamp from outside sending dim orange light through thin wings of her new dressing gown—eighty dollars—and gilding the tight bands of her hair, drawn close so that the white wig might fit. "And it's after one, now."

"It wasn't more than half-past eleven when I came in!"

"Ah, but you've been dreaming," her mother said, and lounged into a chair; "and supper was very stupid, and most of the men are a bit above themselves. And you're sure you've not taken cold, belovedest? With rehearsals only three weeks off, that's so important. We mustn't go back to town feeling fagged."

Lakme remarked, in silence, "Yes, but I'm not going back to town to rehearse. Thanks ever so, but I'm marrying Jimmy Helmuth in the morning." The remark bulged in her throat and stayed there. She said, "I feel all right."

"It's rather important that you should," the lovely woman drawled with a delicate force. One hand with an unlighted cigarette hung toward gray planks of the floor, and the other passed with slowly twitching fingers on the gilded hair. "Yes, rather important, darlingest. You're quite old enough, my Lakme, to see—to understand what's been going on all summer. Nels is off to Atlantic City in the morning. He's replacing some other man in a new show that opens next week. And I dare say he won't be back—dearest."

The girl thought how well she did that, and said, "I'm so sorry, mother dear." But fright froze her hands. Was it just because Jimmy had kissed her that this didn't matter? Her mother's violet eyes were disgorging tears, and that didn't seem terrible either, or that the long body in the chair sagged so wearily.

"Love's an illusion, dearest."

"I suppose so," said Lakme, hitching some of the old pink robe between her ankles. "It—it's too bad, isn't it?"

Her mother sighed. "And I must find something to do. Yes, I can't be too much of a burden on your shoulders, Lakme. I must try to think of something. I don't see why I can't do my share. Darlingest—let me see? Schimmel's giving you a hundred and fifty a week, isn't he? If I can find something to do for the autumn, and let you do what shopping has to be done—you're so very clever about finding nice things cheaply—and that's so remarkable in a child of your spiritual quality——"

"I don't think I have much spiritual quality," said Lakme; "Jim—I've been told I'm intensely practical. Perhaps that's what's wrong with my dancing, mother. I don't enjoy it and I can't make other people enjoy it."

Her mother lifted the cigarette toward her unpainted mouth and slowly let it fall again toward the painted floor. Something passed over her face—a swift trembling that left the gracious lines undistracted when it was gone.

"Darling, it's not you who fail; it's your stupid audience. You'd be so much more appreciated in England—at home. Americans are so—so beefy about dancing, Lakme!"

"Ah," Lakme said in her brain, "but you're clever!" Aloud she said, "Think so, mother? But isn't the sort of thing I do rather—rather stale? There's been the Russians, and all these American dancers and that woman who wears red bath towels. I think it's all rather stale. I'm pretty and I fill in ten minutes of a revue. I don't think I amount to much more than that, dear."

"Oh, so much more," said her mother; "ever so much more, dearest! And you'd be more appreciated at home! Yes, if we could save and scrape together the money to get there, I'm sure you'd be liked in London!"

Her hands chilled again. Lakme heard the band beginning Good Night, Ladies, with a ribald syncopation of the old tune, and her mind filled with this memory of the girl desperately singing on the great stage in brown London because a sorcerer bade her sing. She said, "I doubt it. The fact is, mother, that I'm——"

"I know you're tired of dancing," her mother said in a hurrying flutter of tenderness. "Ah, blood's thicker than water! Mothers always know! You've been so loyal and so splendid, dearest Lakme! And I'm nothing but a burden. I'm so horribly spendthrift! God knows where I'd be without you! I hate to have you dance again this autumn. I've been thinking. If I can get something to do—just the tiniest salary! We can save yours, and by January we could start home. And things are sure to go better over there! The war's opened so many new professions for women, and I do know what things—frocks and hats—should cost in London, and places we might live. Your Uncle George can find me something——" The voice halted, resumed, "And we'll know real people. No more knocking about in hotels and——"

"Mother," said Lakme, "I don't think that——"

The sentence had no end because her throat blocked. She was being dragged from Jimmy toward the brown fogs of London. She would have to

dance forever on chilly stages, whirling and turning in mechanics of light and insipid music.

"You've half forgotten England," Annabel Pruger said, towering in the lamp's dissipated glow. She laid a finger on the shade of cheap chintz and smiled. "But don't think me foolish. We must go back! You might meet the wrong sort of man here. They're mostly wrong. And I should quite die of that! There's not been a gentleman in this wretched hole all summer long. Yes, by January we could make enough to go home. Home," said the beautiful woman, her drawl throbbing, "and forget all this!"

Each of Lakme's hands seemed to hold a lump of ice. She was being dragged limply toward a steamer and some far desolation—another painted flat in London, more rehearsals and more shows.

"But I dance so badly, mother——"

"These sluggish, Philistine audiences have discouraged you, darling! No, trust me! And if you don't want to dance at home, you shan't have to! I'm sure to find something, even if it's helping in a flower shop! And I know decent people at home. Ah, if I hadn't hated to own myself beaten I'd have taken you home long ago, dearest! But I've never quite dared, after using your father's little bit of money and—and having nothing to bring back! And—blood's thicker than water! I've simply lived on you. Do try to forgive me, dearest!"

She turned out the light. In a horrible darkness Lakme heard three sobs peal slowly and then cried out, "Don't, mother!"

"Dearest daughter!"

The kiss descended on Lakme's cheek and her face wetted in the smell of violets that seemed to crush her brain. She murmured, "Don't!" and was aware of her own sobbing. Something had beaten her down. She gulped. "I don't want you to work, mother! Y-you don't know how and—and it doesn't matter! I——"

"But it does matter, dearest! Go to sleep and we'll talk it out in the morning. You're all that I have now and——"

The voice died. The perfume drifted away. Lakme rolled in the bed and dug a pillow with her eyes. Yes, she was lost and she couldn't desert now. Blood was thicker than water! Mother couldn't be left alone. It had happened again. She had been knocked over by the fluttering rush of words and the sight of tears welling from the violet eyes, and the thought of mother in pain. This was worse than having her hair bleached, or taking to the stage. Mother had beaten Jimmy. He was no more than the mouse rustling paper in some corner of the room. Just for this little her mother was all that she could love, and she had to dance on, because mother wanted to go home. Blood was thicker than water; you had to stick to your own people. You couldn't desert.

In the blackness came a feeling of wind, and the mouse rustled his bit of paper loathsomely to keep her awake. They would go to London and she would dance, and her mother would waste money on flimsy frocks and

cushions hemmed with golden lace. No, she wouldn't work. She was made to lie on great couches and talk charmingly to callers and be ever so sympathetic when one came home tired after rehearsals. This would go on, and Jimmy would forget to write, and— She said to the rustling paper, "Ah, stop!" Only you couldn't desert! It was beastly to be disloyal to your own people, and mother was so helpless!

She must go to sleep. If you rubbed your temples slowly and counted slowly and breathed deeply, sleep would come. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight—how awful to have taken eight strokes for that short hole this afternoon! Jimmy had grunted at her. If men didn't flatter women so, everything would be easier in the world. Nine, ten, eleven, twelve—rehearsals the first of September and the new show opening on the twenty-fifth. Ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen—bad luck. Luck! Some people never had any. If her mother hadn't married Pranov she would never have learned to dance. The mouse made the paper rustle fearfully. Lakme said, "Oh—damn it! Stop!" and sobbed.

Then she lay stiffened with her hands on her throat. Something was in the room. There was some presence—not just a mouse. Not a mouse!

"Girl!"

"Oh, Casimir! You—you frightened me!"

"Yeh," said Casimir Smith, invisibly, in the softest murmur, and asked, "Y' bawlin' for, Jane? Heard y'—"

"I wasn't crying."

"Yeh? Liar," the boy said: "y'old woman's been—"

"What are you doing here?"

"Y' gotta marry Jimmy," Casimir told her. "'S been walkin' up'n' down m'room all night. Yeh! Dumb in his head. Came over to stick a note und' y' door. Marry th' ape'r I'll drown y'. Heard y'cryin', girl. 'S matter? Y'old woman sayin' blood' thicker'n water, h'm? Yeh?"

"You heard her!"

"No. World's full of 'em, Jane. Lotta trash livin' on their kids. Yeh, and tryin' to keep 'em from gettin' loose. Quit her an' take Jimmy Helmuth, sister. Yeh? Always marry a good guy, girl, whenever y'can. Kinda scarce. Yeh. Get y'stuff on an' pack up. Getta car out an' run y' to—"

"I've got to stay with mother. Oh, Casimir, I can't marry Jimmy! He—she counts on me. I'm all she has in the world!"

"Yeh? Got her nerve an' her looks, h'm?"

Lakme sat up and whispered, "Don't speak so!" at the empty blackness. Rain made a tumbling sound in gutters overhead. The boy must be standing with his scarlet mouth grinning in this ghastly cloud.

"Yeh, but you want Jimmy, sister, an' y'old woman don't like him. Knows she can't work him. Yeh, she's no fool! M'old man lived offa me 'ntil my brother came home f'm France," the pitiless, soft voice went on, "'n' then I saw through him. Yeh! They're fine 'ntil y'find somebody better! Blood's thicker'n water. Stick t'y'own folks, boy! Yeh!"

"Oh, go away!"

"Gonna take Jimmy?"

"No," said Lakme; "I can't! She—she relies on me! I can't——"

He said, "Damn fool!" and after a moment the door clicked.

"Cas——"

Well, she had done it! That was the end of Jimmy. Lakme slipped out of bed and went to stare through the window at a clot of light in the far bulk of the garage. His messenger had gone back through the rain, and that was the end of it. End of it. The mouse shoved his paper on the floor.

If she lay and listened to that rattle and hiss of the paper she would go mad and jump out of the window or run down to the ocean and bury herself in it. Love had made a fool of her, and blood—did a thousand people tell that to children who danced for them? She must throw that paper out of the window or the mouse would play with it all night. She groped and missed the traveling sheet, and sobbed twice, turning her hands on the floor. She must light the globe and find the thing. It hung by a corner, when she found the catch of the light, to the muddled lump of her fallen dancing dress. It must be the paper Nels Pruger had given her to read. She had thrown it away with the violet rags. He had wanted her to read this. If it was your wife you could leave her. You couldn't leave your own people. Blood was thicker than water, wasn't it?

"Dear Mrs. Pruger," the typed lines said: "While it has never been our custom to advise our clients as to the use of their funds, we occasionally take the liberty of a suggestion." Not very good English, that. "As your account with us has reached the sum of \$7,432.05 we feel that it may be timely to offer some hints on investment. A list of securities is inclosed in this letter——"

Lakme stretched the sheet of paper on her bed's side and knelt, reading it again. "As your account with us has reached——" Seven thousand four hundred thirty-two dollars. And five cents. "A list of securities is inclosed in this letter. You have been one of our clients for seven years. We assume that our services have been satisfactory in that period and offer you the use of our investment department." Who was writing? She looked at "Atchison, Kent and Atchison. Bankers and Brokers. New York—London—Melbourne." Her mother had been one of their clients for seven years. Seven years ago? Out in California where Pranov was giving dancing lessons. Her mother had been one of their clients for seven years. She had been putting money in a bank for seven years! Money.

Lakme said, "No!" to the fluttering curtains of the hot room. Oh, no! She was helpless about money. It just dripped on counters through her slim fingers. She didn't know the prices of anything. She was so clever, and yet she couldn't understand about money, and she wouldn't know where to put it! No, you couldn't love people and cheat them! No! Seven thousand dollars. A thousand dollars a year. It hadn't gone for frocks or bridge or cushions or in restaurants. It had gone into a bank! Pranov's money and

Nels Pruger's and hers. No! You didn't love people and cheat them! She said, "No!" and gulped.

All her clothes were damp and the leather of her dressing bag was wet. Fog or rain had moistened them in the shallow closet. It was hard to find the right shoes. She seemed made of jumbled ropes, and her hands slipped as she jammed a hat on her bleached hair. The room whirled as if she had rehearsed too long, and some intrusive shadow spoke in a dry monotony.

"Don't make so much noise, sister."

"Nels! Did you read—yes, you gave it to me! Nels!"

The dancing man folded his trim gray dressing gown tight to his throat and drearily said, "Yeh. Know how you feel, sister. I picked it out of my mail box Sunday. Had us dancing in this dump for our board and ten dollars a week! Get out of here, sister. That fella's a nice boy. And, listen." He snapped his fingers twice, blinking. "It lasts a long time if you treat it right."

"What, Nels?"

"Love. My folks've been married thirty-three years."

"Oh, Nels, I'm sorry for you!"

"Yeh," said the dancing man. "Pretty sorry for myself. So long."

One little globe burned in the hallway. Lakme dragged a cloak behind her down the stairs, and ground her teeth as her bag bumped the rail. She didn't know—couldn't remember where Helmuth slept. It wasn't in this cottage. It was in one of the scattered little houses closer to the ocean. And if she couldn't find him she must run and telegraph back from somewhere for him to come and find her. She must get away! Casimir Smith could drive her to the railroad and let her get on a train. Rain banged on her hat and rattled on the stiff straw. There was no window lit in the garage and she was not even sure that she was headed for its length in the darkness. She sobbed and lurched against shingle that hurt her elbow.

"Casimir!"

When she had screamed three times the voice said crossly, "Yeh? Quit yellin', Jane!" and a flashlight broke on sodden grass and a pair of brown feet that moved below wet white trousers.

"I've got to get away! She——"

"Yeh? Did y'hit her on her jaw?"

"No! She—she may wake up! Nels gave me a letter! She—she's been hiding money—in a bank—seven thous—in a bank."

"Yeh? 'S usually in a sock," he murmured, rippling his toes in the grass, and then chuckled, "Gonna take Jimmy now?"

"Yes! But I must get away! Oh, please! I must get away! I've tried to be loyal and—and love her and—I must get away!"

"Yeh," he said, and took her arm. His murmur deepened into a growl, "Yeh! 'S all right, Jane! Y'all right. Won't matter pretty quick. 'S all right, girl. Get in here, sister. C'mon."

A bulb glowed in the height of the garage. Lakme saw the blue motor

that was Jimmy's and scrambled desperately into its low seat. Casimir Smith buttoned his pajamas to the throat and ate his thumb for a moment, staring at her.

"Gonna faint on us, Jane?"

"No!"

"'S fine. Stay there an' I'll get y'he, sist'. Powder y'nose some."

He trotted through the great doors of the garage into the rain and Lakme cringed in the car. Her mother might see this light and come—and make her believe that it wasn't true. She seemed dangerously visible in the buff seat with the bulb swaying above the blue car's roof, and her mother might wake. Her breath hurt in her throat, and Casimir Smith had been gone for hours. Lakme gripped her hands together and whimpered, stiffly sitting on the buff seat with her hat dripping and a last sense telling her that her dress had been pulled on the wrong way to the front. She ached and her mouth dried in the effort of not screaming. If she shut her eyes and counted they might come sooner.

"One, two, three——"

"She's fainted, Kid!"

"'S all right, Jimmy. Husky girl. Get over it. Drive fast. Do her good. Chuck y' bag in the back seat."

"I haven't fainted, Jimmy. Oh, do hurry! Hurry!"

"Yeh," said Casimir Smith. "G'on away f'm here! Yeh, an' next time y'get married don't keep me up all night tellin' me! Yeh! Y'all talk too much! It's how love acts. 'S worse'n lickin'."

"Oh, hurry, Jimmy!"

His face was puffed around the nose and his tie writhed under one ear. He kicked and jerked among the wheels and things that started the car and said, "Oh, damn the thing! You do trust me, Lakme?"

"Of course I do! Only hurry! You can't understand how I want to get away from here! Make him understand, Casimir! You've been through it!"

"Yeh. Hurry, fella!" said the boy, his eyes yellow under his brown forehead, plucking his drenched white jacket from his chest. "Yeh! Hurts her bad. Y'gonna be all right, Lak. 'S good guy. 'S fine girl, fella. Nev' gonna marry no dame 'ntil I find one's good to sump'n—her folk'r a cat. Y'can love a lotta dames. Gotta marry one y'can trust, h'm? Y'gotta good girl, fella. Yeh. S'long, Lak!"

The car plunged at the rain and night. Lakme dropped her head on the man's shoulder and said sulkily, "You were so slow in comin' that——"

"But you knew I'd come?"

"Of course! But you were slow, Jimmy!"

"Well, shut up," he said. "I have to drive."

His lips touched her nose.

"You darling," Lakme said, and sobbed. "You darling!"

THE END OF SOMETHING¹

by Ernest Hemingway

IN the old days Hortons Bay was a lumbering town. No one who lived in it was out of sound of the big saws in the mill by the lake. Then one year there were no more logs to make lumber. The lumber schooners came into the bay and were loaded with the cut of the mill that stood stacked in the yard. All the piles of lumber were carried away. The big mill building had all its machinery that was removable taken out and hoisted on board one of the schooners by the men who had worked in the mill. The schooner moved out of the bay toward the open lake carrying the two great saws, the traveling carriage that hurled the logs against the revolving, circular saws and all the rollers, wheels, belts and iron piled on a hull-deep load of lumber. Its open hold covered with canvas and lashed tight, the sails of the schooner filled and it moved out into the open lake, carrying with it everything that had made the mill a mill and Hortons Bay, a town.

The one-story bunk houses, the eating-house, the company store, the mill offices, and the big mill itself stood deserted in the acres of sawdust that covered the swampy meadow by the shore of the bay.

Ten years later there was nothing of the mill left except the broken white limestone of its foundations showing through the swampy second growth as Nick and Marjorie rowed along the shore. They were trolling along the edge of the channel-bank where the bottom dropped off suddenly from sandy shallows to twelve feet of dark water. They were trolling on their way to the point to set night lines for rainbow trout.

"There's our old ruin, Nick," Marjorie said.

Nick, rowing, looked at the white stone in the green trees.

"There it is," he said.

"Can you remember when it was a mill?" Marjorie asked.

"I can just remember," Nick said.

"It seems more like a castle," Marjorie said.

Nick said nothing. They rowed on out of sight of the mill, following the shore line. Then Nick cut across the bay.

"They aren't striking," he said.

"No," Marjorie said. She was intent on the rod all the time they trolled, even when she talked. She loved to fish. She loved to fish with Nick.

Close beside the boat a big trout broke the surface of the water. Nick pulled hard on one oar so the boat would turn and the bait spinning far behind would pass where the trout was feeding. As the trout's back came up out of the water the minnows jumped wildly. They sprinkled the surface

¹ From *In Our Time*, copyright, 1925, Charles Scribner's Sons, by permission.

like a handful of shot thrown into the water. Another trout broke water, feeding on the other side of the boat.

"They're feeding," Marjorie said.

"But they won't strike," Nick said.

He rowed the boat around to troll past both the feeding fish, then headed it for the point. Marjorie did not reel in until the boat touched the shore.

They pulled the boat up the beach and Nick lifted out a pail of live perch. The perch swam in the water in the pail. Nick caught three of them with his hands and cut their heads off and skinned them while Marjorie chased with her hands in the bucket, finally caught a perch, cut its head off and skinned it. Nick looked at her fish.

"You don't want to take the ventral fin out," he said. "It'll be all right for bait but it's better with the ventral fin in."

He hooked each of the skinned perch through the tail. There were two hooks attached to a leader on each rod. Then Marjorie rowed the boat out over the channel-bank, holding the line in her teeth, and looking toward Nick, who stood on the shore holding the rod and letting the line run out from the reel.

"That's about right," he called.

"Should I let it drop?" Marjorie called back, holding the line in her hand.

"Sure. Let it go." Marjorie dropped the line overboard and watched the baits go down through the water.

She came in with the boat and ran the second line out the same way. Each time Nick set a heavy slab of driftwood across the butt of the rod to hold it solid and propped it up at an angle with a small slab. He reeled in the slack line so the line ran taut out to where the bait rested on the sandy floor of the channel and set the click on the reel. When a trout, feeding on the bottom, took the bait it would run with it, taking line out of the reel in a rush and making the reel sing with the click on.

Marjorie rowed up the point a little way so she would not disturb the line. She pulled hard on the oars and the boat went way up the beach. Little waves came in with it. Marjorie stepped out of the boat and Nick pulled the boat high up on the beach.

"What's the matter, Nick?" Marjorie asked.

"I don't know," Nick said, getting wood for a fire.

They made a fire with driftwood. Marjorie went to the boat and brought a blanket. The evening breeze blew the smoke toward the point, so Marjorie spread the blanket out between the fire and the lake.

Marjorie sat on the blanket with her back to the fire and waited for Nick. He came over and sat down beside her on the blanket. In back of them was the close second-growth timber of the point and in front was the bay with the mouth of Hortons Creek. It was not quite dark. The firelight went as far as the water. They could both see the two steel rods at an angle over the dark water. The fire glinted on the reels.

Marjorie unpacked the basket of supper.

"I don't feel like eating," said Nick.

"Come on and eat, Nick."

"All right."

They ate without talking, and watched the two rods and the fire-light in the water.

"There's going to be a moon tonight," said Nick. He looked across the bay to the hills that were beginning to sharpen against the sky. Beyond the hills he knew the moon was coming up.

"I know it," Marjorie said happily.

"You know everything," Nick said.

"Oh, Nick, please cut it out! Please, please don't be that way!"

"I can't help it," Nick said. "You do. You know everything. That's the trouble. You know you do."

Marjorie did not say anything.

"I've taught you everything. You know you do. What don't you know, anyway?"

"Oh, shut up," Marjorie said. "There comes the moon."

They sat on the blanket without touching each other and watched the moon rise.

"You don't have to talk silly," Marjorie said; "what's really the matter?"

"I don't know."

"Of course you know."

"No I don't."

"Go on and say it."

Nick looked on at the moon, coming up over the hills.

"It isn't fun any more."

He was afraid to look at Marjorie. He looked at Marjorie. She sat there with her back toward him. He looked at her back. "It isn't fun any more. Not any of it."

She didn't say anything. He went on. "I feel as though everything was gone to hell inside of me. I don't know, Marge. I don't know what to say."

He looked on at her back.

"Isn't love any fun?" Marjorie said.

"No," Nick said. Marjorie stood up. Nick sat there, his head in his hands.

"I'm going to take the boat," Marjorie called to him. "You can walk back around the point."

"All right," Nick said. "I'll push the boat off for you."

"You don't need to," she said. She was afloat in the boat on the water with the moonlight on it. Nick went back and lay down with his face in the blanket by the fire. He could hear Marjorie rowing on the water.

He lay there for a long time. He lay there while he heard Bill come into the clearing, walking around through the woods. He felt Bill coming up to the fire. Bill didn't touch him, either.

"Did she go all right?" Bill said.

"Oh, yes." Nick said, lying, his face on the blanket.

"Have a scene?"

"No, there wasn't any scene."

"How do you feel?"

"Oh, go away, Bill! Go away for a while."

Bill selected a sandwich from the lunch basket and walked over to have a look at the rods.

ALAS, POOR BOLLINGTON!¹

by A. E. Coppard

I WALKED out of the hotel, just as I was, and left her there. I never went back again. I don't think I intended anything quite so final, so dastardly; I had not intended it, I had not thought of doing so, but that is how it happened. I lost her, lost my wife purposely. It was heartless, it was shabby, for she was a nice woman, a charming woman, a good deal younger than I was, a splendid woman, in fact she was very beautiful, and yet I ran away from her. How can you explain that, Turner?"

Poor Bollington looked at Turner, who looked at his glass of whiskey, and that looked irresistible—he drank some. Bollington sipped a little from his glass of milk.

I often found myself regarding Bollington as a little old man. Most of the club members did so too, but he was not that at all, he was still on the sunny side of fifty, but *so* unassertive, no presence to speak of, no height, not enough hair to mention—if he had had it would surely have been yellow. So mild and modest he cut no figure at all, just a man in glasses that seemed rather big for him. Turner was different, though he was just as bald; he had stature and bulk, his very pince-nez seemed twice the size of Bollington's spectacles. They had not met each other for ten years.

"Well, yes," Turner said, "but that was a serious thing to do."

"Wasn't it!" said the other, "and I had no idea of the enormity of the offence—not at the time. She might have been dead, poor girl, and her executors advertising for me. She had money you know, her people had been licensed victuallers, quite wealthy. Scandalous!"

Bollington brooded upon his sin until Turner sighed: "Ah well, my dear chap."

"But you have no idea," protested Bollington, "how entirely she engrossed me. She was twenty-five and I was forty when we married. She was entrancing. She had always lived in a stinking hole in Balham, and it is amazing how strictly some of those people keep their children; licensed victuallers, did I tell you? Well I was forty, and she was twenty-five; we lived for a year

¹ From *The Black Dog*, Messrs. Jonathan Cape, 1923. By permission of the author.

dodging about from one hotel to another all over the British Isles, she was a perfect little nomad. Are you married, Turner?"

No, Turner was not married, he never had been.

"O, but you should be," cried little Bollington, "it's an extraordinary experience, the real business of the world is marriage, marriage. I was deliriously happy and she was learning French and Swedish—that's where we were going later. She was an enchanting little thing, fair, with blue eyes; Phoebe her name was."

Turner thoughtfully brushed his hand across his generous baldness, then folded his arms.

"You really should," repeated Bollington, "you ought to, really. But I remember we went from Killarney to Belfast, and there something dreadful happened. I don't know, it had been growing on her I suppose, but she took a dislike to me there, had strange fancies, thought I was unfaithful to her. You see she was popular wherever we went, a lively little woman, in fact she wasn't merely a woman, she was a little magnet, men congregated and clung to her like so many tacks and nails and pins. I didn't object at all—on the contrary, 'Enjoy yourself, Phoebe,' I said, 'I don't expect you always to hang around an old fogey like me.' Fogey was the very word I used; I didn't mean it, of course, but that was the line I took, for she was so charming until she began to get so bad tempered. And believe me, that made her angry, furious. No, not the fogey, but the idea that I did not object to her philandering. It was fatal, it gave colour to her suspicions of me—Turner, I was as innocent as any lamb—tremendous colour. And she had such a sharp tongue! If you ventured to differ from her—and you couldn't help differing sometimes—she'd positively bludgeon you, and you couldn't help being bludgeoned. And she had a passion for putting me right, and I always seemed to be so very wrong, always. She would not be satisfied until she had proved it, and it was so monstrous to be made feel that because you were rather different from other people you were an impertinent fool. Yes, I seemed at last to gain only the pangs and none of the prizes of marriage. Now there was a lady we met in Belfast to whom I paid some attention. . . ."

"O, good Lord!" groaned Turner.

"No, but listen," pleaded Bollington, "it was a very innocent friendship—nothing was further from my mind—and she was very much like my wife, very much, it was noticeable, everybody spoke of it—I mean the resemblance. A Mrs. Macarthy, a delightful woman, and Phoebe simply loathed her. I confess that my wife's innuendoes were so mean and persistent that at last I hadn't the strength to deny them, in fact at times I wished they were true. Love is idolatry if you like, but it cannot be complete immolation—there's no such bird as the phoenix, is there, Turner?"

"What, what?"

"No such bird as the phoenix."

"No, there is no such bird, I believe."

"And sometimes I had to ask myself quite seriously if I really hadn't been

up to some infidelity! Nonsense, of course, but I assure you that was the effect it was having upon me. I had doubts of myself, frenzied doubts! And it came to a head between Phoebe and me in our room one day. We quarrelled, O dear, how we quarrelled! She said I was sly, two-faced, unfaithful, I was a scoundrel, and so on. Awfully untrue, all of it. She accused me of dreadful things with Mrs. Macarthy and she screamed out: 'I hope you will treat her better than you have treated me.' Now what did she mean by that, Turner?"

Bollington eyed his friend as if he expected an oracular answer, but just as Turner was about to respond, Bollington continued: "Well, I never found out, I never knew, for what followed was too terrible. 'I shall go out,' I said, 'it will be better, I think.' Just that, nothing more. I put on my hat and I put my hand on the knob of the door when she said most violently: 'Go with your Macarthys, I never want to see your filthy face again!' Extraordinary you know, Turner. Well, I went out, and I will not deny I was in a rage, terrific. It was raining but I didn't care, and I walked about in it. Then I took shelter in a bookseller's doorway opposite a shop that sold tennis rackets and tobacco, and another one that displayed carnations and peaches on wads of coloured wool. The rain came so fast that the streets seemed to empty, and the passers-by were horribly silent under their umbrellas, and their footsteps splashed so dully, and I tell you I was very sad, Turner, there. I debated whether to rush across the road and buy a lot of carnations and peaches and take them to Phoebe. But I did not do so, Turner, I never went back, never."

"Why, Bollington, you, you were a positive ruffian, Bollington."

"O, scandalous," rejoined the ruffian.

"Well, out with it, what about this Mrs. Macarthy?"

"Mrs. Macarthy? But, Turner, I never saw her again, never, I . . . I forgot her. Yes, I went prowling on until I found myself at the docks and there it suddenly became dark; I don't know, there was no evening, no twilight, the day stopped for a moment—and it did not recover. There were hundreds of bullocks slithering and panting and steaming in the road, thousands; lamps were hung up in the harbour, cabs and trollies rattled round the bullocks, the rain fell dismally and everybody hurried. I went into the dock and saw them loading the steamer, it was called s.s. *Frolic*, and really, Turner, the things they put into the belly of that steamer were rather funny: tons and tons of monstrous big chain, the links as big as soup plates, and two or three pantechuicon vans. Yes, but I was anything but frolicsome, I assure you, I was full of misery and trepidation and the deuce knows what. I did not know what I wanted to do, or what I was going to do, but I found myself buying a ticket to go to Liverpool on that steamer, and, in short, I embarked. How wretched I was, but how determined. Everything on board was depressing and dirty, and when at last we moved off the foam slewed away in filthy bubbles as if that dirty steamer had been sick and was running away from it. I got to Liverpool in the early morn, but I did not stay there, it is such a clamouring place, all trams and trollies and teashops. I sat in the station for an hour, the most miserable man alive, the most miserable ever born. I wanted some rest, some peace, some

repose, but they never ceased shunting an endless train of goods trucks, banging and screeching until I almost screamed at the very porters. Criff was the name on some of the trucks, I remember, Criff, and everything seemed to be going criff, criff, criff. I haven't discovered to this day what Criff signifies, whether it's a station or a company, or a manufacture, but it was Criff, I remember. Well, I rushed to London and put my affairs in order. A day or two later I went to Southampton and boarded another steamer and put to sea, or rather we were ignominiously lugged out of the dock by a little rat of a tug that seemed all funnel and hooter. I was off to America, and there I stopped for over three years."

Turner sighed. A waiter brought him another glass of spirit.

"I can't help thinking, Bollington, that it was all very fiery and touchy. Of course, I don't know, but really it was a bit steep, very squeamish of you. What did your wife say?"

"I never communicated with her, I never heard from her, I just dropped out. My filthy face, you know, she did not want to see it again."

"O come, Bollington! And what did Mrs. Macarthy say?"

"Mrs. Macarthy! I never saw or heard of her again. I told you that."

"Ah, yes, you told me. So you slung off to America."

"I was intensely miserable there for a long while. Of course I loved Phoebe enormously, I felt the separation, I . . . O, it is impossible to describe. But what was worst of all was the meanness of my behaviour, there was nothing heroic about it, I soon saw clearly that it was a shabby trick, disgusting, I had bolted and left her to the mercy of . . . well, of whatever there was. It made such an awful barrier—you've no idea of my compunction—I couldn't make overtures—'Let us forgive and forget.' I was a mean rascal, I *was* filthy. That was the barrier—myself; I was too bad. I thought I should recover and enjoy life again, I began to think of Phoebe as a cat, a little cat. I went everywhere and did everything. But America is a big country, I couldn't get into contact, I was lonely, very lonely, and although two years went by I longed for Phoebe. Everything I did I wanted to do with Phoebe by my side. And then my cousin, my only relative in the world—he lived in England—he died. I scarcely ever saw him, but still he was my kin. And he died. You've no comprehension, Turner, of the truly awful sensation such a bereavement brings. Not a soul in the world now would have the remotest interest in my welfare. O, I tell you, Turner, it was tragic, tragic, when my cousin died. It made my isolation complete. I was alone, a man who had made a dreadful mess of life. What with sorrow and remorse I felt that I should soon die, not of disease, but disgust."

"You were a great ninny," ejaculated his friend. "Why the devil didn't you hurry back, claim your wife, bygones be bygones; why bless my conscience, what a ninny, what a great ninny!"

"Yes, Turner, it is as you say. But though conscience is a good servant it is a very bad master, it overruled me, it shamed me, and I hung on to America for still another year. I tell you my situation was unbearable, I was tied to my

misery, I was a tethered dog, a duck without water—even dirty water. And I hadn't any faith in myself or in my case; I knew I was wrong, had always been wrong, Phoebe had taught me that. I hadn't any faith, I wish I had had. Faith can move mountains, so they say, though I've never heard of it actually being done."

"No, not in historical times," declared Turner.

"What do you mean by that?"

"O well, time is nothing, it's nothing, it comes and off it goes. Has it ever occurred to you, Bollington, that in 5,000 years or so there will be nobody in the world speaking the English language, our very existence even will be speculated upon, as if we were the *Anthropophagi*? O good lord, yes."

And another whiskey.

"You know, Bollington, you were a perfect fool. You behaved like one of those half-baked civil service hounds who lunch in a dairy on a cup of tea and a cream horn. You wanted some beef, some ginger. You came back, you must have come back because there you are now."

"Yes, Turner, I came back after nearly four years. Everything was different, ah, how strange! I could not find Phoebe, it is weird how people can disappear. I made enquiries, but it was like looking for a lost umbrella, fruitless after so long."

"Well, but what about Mrs. Macarthy?"

Mr. Bollington said, slowly and with the utmost precision: "I did not see Mrs. Macarthy again."

"O, of course, you did not see her again, not ever."

"Not ever. I feared Phoebe had gone abroad too, but at last I found her in London . . ."

"No," roared Turner, "why the devil couldn't you say so and done with it? I've been sweating with sympathy for you. O, I say, Bollington!"

"My dear Turner, listen. Do you know, she was delighted to see me, she even kissed me, straight off, and we went out to dine and had the very deuce of a spread and we were having the very deuce of a good time. She was lovelier than ever, and I could see all her old affection for me was returning, she was so . . . well, I can't tell you, Turner, but she had no animosity whatever, no grievance, she would certainly have taken me back that very night. O dear, dear . . . and then! I was anxious to throw myself at her feet, but you couldn't do that in a public café, I could only touch her hands, beautiful, as they lay on the white linen cloth. I kept asking: 'Do you forgive me?' and she would reply: 'I have nothing to forgive, dear, nothing.' How wonderful that sounded to my truly penitent soul—I wanted to die.

"'But you don't ask me where I've been!' she cried gaily, 'or what I've been doing, you careless old Peter. I've been to France, and Sweden too!'

"I was delighted to hear that, it was so very plucky.

"'When did you go?' I asked.

"'When I left you,' she said.

"'You mean when I went away?'"

"'Did you go away? O, of course, you must have. Poor Peter, what a sad time he has had.'

"I was a little bewildered, but I was delighted; in fact, Turner, I was hopelessly infatuated again, I wanted to wring out all the dregs of my detestable villainy and be absolved. All I could begin with was: 'Were you not very glad to be rid of me?'

"'Well,' she said, 'my great fear at first was that you would find me again and make it up. I didn't want that then, at least, I thought I didn't.'

"'That's exactly what I felt,' I exclaimed, 'but how could I find you?'

"'Well,' Phoebe said, 'you might have found out and followed me. But I promise never to run away again, Peter dear, never.'

"Turner, my reeling intelligence swerved like a shot bird.

"'Do you mean, Phoebe, that you ran away from *me*?'

"'Yes, didn't I?' she answered.

"'But I ran away from *you*,' I said. 'I walked out of the hotel on that dreadful afternoon we quarrelled so, and I never went back. I went to America. I was in America nearly four years.'

"'Do you mean you ran away from *me*?' she cried.

"'Yes,' I said, "didn't I?'

"'But that is exactly what I did—I mean, I ran away from you. I walked out of the hotel directly you had gone—I never went back, and I've been abroad thinking how tremendously I had served you out, and wondering what you thought of it all and where you were.'

"I could only say 'Good God, Phoebe, I've had the most awful four years of remorse and sorrow, all vain, mistaken, useless, thrown away.' And she said: 'And I've had four years—living in a fool's paradise after all. How dared you run away, it's disgusting!'

"And, Turner, in a moment she was at me again in her old dreadful way, and the last words I had from her were: 'Now I *never* want to see your face again, never, this *is* the end!'

"And that's how things are now, Turner. It's rather sad, isn't it?"

"Sad! Why you chump, when was it you saw her?"

"O, a long time ago, it must be nearly three years now."

"Three years! But you'll see her again!"

"Tfool! No, no, no, Turner. God bless me, no, no, no!" said the little old man.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN—AMERICANS?¹*by Wilbur Daniel Steele*

THEY live in the country of the old—old houses, old stands, old men. Already they dream, and this is their dream, that when they are gone the tides, which seem to eat deeper into the Cove each year, will just come on up one spring and carry what's left of Cape Cod down under the water of the Seven Seas that in its old youth it conquered, its work and its glory done. And that will be before long now, for there are only a few folks left.

You can count the families on one hand. There are the Whites and the Fullers in the Hollow, the Rogerses at the Bog, the Brewster brothers at the Cove. That's about all now in this tenuous, half-drowned, seven-mile wrist of the Cape. Of the Whites and Rogerses there are four generations, in the Fuller house three: the latter ends run pretty pattering, though, and pretty thin.

If it's a far cry from the Edward Fuller who came ashore to say his prayers, chase Indians, and leave his name on the Pilgrim Tablet over in Provincetown, down to Eddie Fuller, yawning and attending to his pimples behind the post-office boxes at the Center—if it's a far cry from these dreadless "subjects of the dread sovereign" down to the youthless White youths, flivver rattling to their fevered merry-makings at Wellfleet or Eastham, their galvanic dead-frog dancing, their drug-store tipple, and their radio jazz—if there's a gap there, there's a gap almost as wide and quite as melancholy between these tag ends of the stock and a generation still living under the roofs with them—Sam White and Benjie Fuller in the Hollow, Ember Rogers at the Bog, Andy and Isaiah Brewster at the Cove—men who fetched Kennebec ice cakes to Calcutta and brought new China tea up the Thames in the *Sea Glory* and the *A. J. Stowell* two weeks ahead of London's own East-Indiamen in the days that were days.

In those days the Cape bred women too. Look at Molly, Andy Brewster's wife, that's dead and gone. Then look at the Molly Brewster of to-day. She keeps house for her great-grandfather Andy and his brother Isaiah at the Cove, and what house she keeps! Well, it's not the way the other Molly did it sixty years ago. Bread baked in Boston, beans baked in Chicago, cake in cardboard from goodness-knows where! She hasn't the time, she says.

Hasn't the time! Those two old men fathom the sad, deep, literal truth of that. She hasn't the time. She came too late, the sands too nearly run. After her the deluge; so why take pains? What's the use of forethought,

¹ From *The Man Who Saw Through Heaven and Other Stories*, Harpers, 1927. By permission of the author.

with nothing to come? What's the use of character, never to be handed down? What's the use even of appearances? Studying her secretly from beneath their watery lids, they comprehend. That is why, then, she speaks a language of strange, daring, slipshod words; why her gestures are all immoderate and her songs out of tune; why she goes about unabashed in skirts as short and lips as red as a California harlot in the days of gold. That is why she is never at home evenings, darning or quilting under the sitting-room lamp, but off as soon as ever the supper dishes are stacked, with a pat and a fling and a mouth of rebellion, flitting the devil alone knows where in the dark of the country of the old.

"Let us eat, drink, and be merry . . ." Poor girl!

She hasn't the time even to care about the company she keeps. This strikes deepest into the hearts of Andy and Isaiah. Their pride is bitter. To think of these two blond vikings of the republic who carried the Stars and Stripes around a wondering world, who came home to fetch good, honest Indies rum ashore under the dark of the Cove like the free men they were, and went up to the meeting house in their Sabbath beavers to worship the God of Massachusetts as only free men may—to think of them having to sit, shackled to their rockers by the weight of their proud years, and watch the remnant of their line and population going, without visibly caring, to the dogs!

They would have called him a dog in their time, or at least "one of them niggers of some sort."

He comes out of the deepening shadows. Whence he comes, in that narrow land where there are only the Rogerses and Brewsters, the Fullers and the Whites, who can say? Andy and Isaiah can't. When they try, their minds close up.

Their minds do that of late years. More and more easily. When, at the ice-cream feast of the Dorcases last Autumn, the two old fellows undertook in mournful gaiety to twit the schoolma'am upon the dwindling of her flock, and when she looked puzzled (for all the world) and told them that, land alive! they weren't to worry, she had her hands full, and would have them a sight fuller, she guessed, before they got around to putting in the new primary room—when she said that, Isaiah looked at Andy and Andy at Isaiah, one winked and the other cackled, and their minds, like wary clam shells, closed up tight. "Primary room!" They weren't to be taken in by jokes like that. They were too smart.

He comes out of the deepening shadows, his approach heralded, long before he is seen, by the sounding boards of the hills that gather down to the Cove, the clank of a loose brake beam, the whine of gritted springs, gaskets wheezing. A curious centaur, head and shoulders and busy arms of a man, body of an ungroomed half-ton truck; so from their rockers on the porch behind the mosquito-netting they always see him, Jimmy the Greek. So he careens to a halt under the antique, uneasy willows in the blue-brown shadow cast by

Sheep Hill; so he snorts, backs, swerves, carricoles, pawing the sand, gamboling in the twilight of these Yankee gods; so he rears there, breathing heavily with his pitted cylinders, peering glassily with his one large rectangular eye at the house beyond the turf, the house native and noble, solid and broad and low, with a roof like another slope of the gray Pamet moors. So, unbudging from his hybrid shell, he calls through the dusk: "Molly to home?"

Neither Andy nor Isaiah answers. Rock, rock, rock, their chairs and their dry bones creaking, their eyes meeting, full of repugnance, rebellion, appeal. They'd have their tongues cut out before they'd speak.

No need. Molly has answered herself: "Yep, just a second I'll be with yu, Jim, old kid."

She passes out between the rockers, hatless, free of elbow, wanton of stocking, neither mother of to-morrow nor daughter of yesterday.

"Where you bound for, Molly?" Andy writhes. He feels degraded.

"Where you bound?" Isaiah writhes. He too had sworn never to ask again.

"Oh, nowheres. Up to the dance at Chatham, that's all. Oh, for the love, Jimmy, can that honking, will yu! I'm on my way! Now, Daddies, run, climb in your beds like good boys. Sound sleep, sweet dreams!"

Sleep! Dreams! The mockery!

Their rockers are still. Leaning forward, squeezing the chair arms with their vein-corded fists, they follow the iron flight of the centaur, cast back in fainter and fainter reverberations from the folded moor sides, careening farther away, deeper away in the mists of the falling night.

He's going up Graveyard Hill now. If only their legs could run as swiftly as their minds. He's abreast of the old Snow place now. Thrmmmm! Whine and wheeze! An abominable whisper threading the valleys. It's louder for an instant as though a door in the hills had opened. He's crossing the marsh at the Center now, this what-is-he? This Greek. This what's-his-name? J. Krenk, General Trucking. Jimmy the Greek. And Molly Brewster!

Anger, reckless and helpless, sweeps them.

Let him take her. Let him take her back to his lemon-peddling, olive-stinking, two-for-a-nickel Levant ports. Then let her see!

Then let her think of those white women, the other Mollys, her mothers!

Memories submerge the two men; their tantrum passes and gives place to nostalgia; they turn towards, feeling themselves abandoned, defeated at last. The mosquito bar is a cage, oppressing their lungs and bringing to their skins a faint, chill sweat. Moved by a common impulse, they get up and rush out. They have forgotten their hats, and Isaiah's head is as bald as a porpoise. What matter? Their rheumatics! Their hearts! What odds!

Where are they going, hoisting their feet so industriously along the clam-shell metal of this road? Where and why?

"We might drop around and see Sam White a minute, the night's so fine."

"So we might. I hear tell he was ailin' a trifle yesterday."

Two shafts of light, streaming from nowhere, wheel across the dark. Two orbs, sudden and blinding, fetch up with a snort to eye the vivid old men.

"Here they are now," comes a voice out of the creature.

"Why," gasps Andy, "if 'tain't the White boys!" Isaiah, blinking into the headlights, lifts a reedy voice: "We was bound over your way, boys."

"Well, ma said we should stop by and tell you, and save you the trip. It'll be Friday at two, the fun'ral."

The monster squats there on its rubber haunches, purring, reading their stupid faces. After a little it says: "You'd heard about gran'pa, hadn't you? Went last evenin', quiet, no pain. And it's Friday at two." Presently it gives them over for dumb ones, bounces around in the road and streams off up the vale, leaving their eyes full of stars.

"Sam!" says one.

"Sam!" says the other. That's all.

Perhaps it's the way it happened, the stage effects; perhaps it's something long predestined in the calendar of their years. No matter, the night has turned a corner and become apocalyptic.

Sam White is gone.

In silence they plod back. They plod back toward the cage of the netting, the eighty-year prison of the dark house. Sleep. Dreams.

But, no-sir! Not by a dang sight, they won't. They bolt the road and flee it at right angles across the tricky footing of the poverty-grass.

"They seek water, and die in the open." That's rats.

But why all this? They knew Sam had to go sooner or later and give over his much of room to the returning wilderness and the climbing tides. Just as they know that Benjie and Ember will have to give over theirs, and they themselves, and let the tired Cape go down. Didn't they know that?

They're silly, but you can't argue it. It's something in this night, something let loose, something that pursues and climbs up their legs like a travesty of strength, another childhood. So they clamber for all they're worth, in silence, their mouths open, as if it were true that the valley behind was filling up with the flood.

They look back when they reach the crest of Sheep Hill, and from the height they see the country familiar to them, rod by rod of its folded moors, its dunes and winding marshes, spread of a sudden fantastic and pixy-peopled under this night. Will-o'-the-wisps and ghost-fires.

There's John Champion's house, under the shoulder of Finback, a mile to the east. John died a good twenty years ago, and his daughter's family moved to Iowa. Yet there looks to be a light in it, a goblin cheer. Dave Burch passed on in the nineties; his children live in Los Angeles; the homestead, hidden under the cottonwoods in the Flat, opens an eye in distant banshee mockery. And there again. As if there were people, populations! And there again. Like a lamp on Borneo Plain!

There's one element that never betrays, but always plays fair. If the land is playing tricks with your eyes, old fellows, turn them to the sea.

Across the water the sky toward Boston shows a late loom of dusk, doubled upside down in the mirroring plain. Not far offshore, across the mouth of the Cove, a fisherman sails, his dim masts erect in the meager breeze. Farther distant, toward the lights on Provincetown shore, a monster lies at rest on the sea.

So the sea too is corruptible to-night, even the sea. It abides Leviathan. Leviathan blowing a leaden, lazy spout; prodigious creature, ink-black, and incandescent-striped.

"She come in weeth engine trouble," says a voice.

There's another watcher on Sheep Hill. He arises from a beach-plum bush at their feet, headless, because he has his coat shawlwise over his head.

"I never seen her before, thees ship, and that's funny because my boy goes een her, and she's lak a city, he says. Fifty-nine t'ousand ton! What do you know about that?"

What, indeed, do they know about that? Except that the night is trying to play them another trick. Painting that shadow on the shadows out there, enormous; as though a master and a mate of an incomparable *Sea Glory* were to be taken in by jest as thin as that, a ship enormous as eighty *Sea Glories* on one keel!

"I tell you," says the shade, "these Englishmann, these Germann, they got notheeng on us now. One day us Americans we weel be as beeg a shipping nation as they is on the sea; you watch."

It's too rare. Andy and Isaiah open their mouths to chuckle, and before they can chuckle, a hot, contemptuous anger has got in their throats instead.

"Who are *you*?" they cry, and "Where you from?" Those voices that rang, full-winded, absolute, over the decks of the white clippers of the years when the world rubbed its eyes. Echoes now.

Echoes, yes, but echoes still puissant. The headless Jack-in-the-box sounds fetched aback and ill at ease.

"Wh-wh-who am I? Well, I guess you know me, Meester Brewster. You know Manuel Braganza. You seen me round plentee, I guess. Since five year I got thees old Champion place back here, crost from Jimmee the Greek. I guess you know *me*, all right."

"Nope."

"You don't know Manuel Brag—don't know Manny the Lisbon?"

"Never hear the name. Never!"

"You—you—never hear o' my boy Johnnee?"

"Johnnie who?"

Silence. That has done for him. It has done for them too; done wonders. Their feet are solid on their own hill again and they begin to tower. Men against bogies, men will win every time.

It's true. The spook hasn't a word. Presently he begins to fade before their eyes, a receding whisper of sand. Across the hilltop and down the slope

the long, black, dismembered torso vanishes degree by degree into the dark above the invisible Cove.

Give these old fellows an inch and they'll take a mile. The impulse to pursue, to rout him sevenfold, to crow, to pile it on, is too strong. Nor is it altogether this that hauls them to the sandy precipice where he disappeared. Triumph has given sudden rein to memories; their feet are in old paths; their tongues wag.

"Remember that night the revenue man come snoopin'?"

"Remember the skiff bottom-up on the beach with the three bar'ls of rum under it, and me under it with 'em and my legs caught out by the gun'l, full in view?"

"Rec'lect the brig hove to out there, 'bout where that fisherman lays now?"

"The *Abraham*, wa'n't it? And Ezra Small?"

They pause. Pause? Where are they? What in the name of Jehoshaphat are they doing here, old flies, clinging midway of the precipitous sand? This much is certain: if they don't catch their death one way they'll catch it another.

They pause. Hunkering down in little sand slides, they gaze at the becalmed schooner. In the cobweb starlight it might truly be the *Abraham*, and Captain Ezra prowling the deck and chewing his whisker and wondering what's wrong with the Brewster boys ashore. They gaze at the pool of the inlet below them, and there the starlight, chasing the ripples, weaves silver stuff of dreams, mesmeric, fluent. The gods are young.

"Rec'lect that night, eh?"

"Remember Molly. . . ."

Molly! A subconscious discord. A rift of syncopation, dilute, galvanic; a painted mouth, an empty head; a half-ton truck, a Greek.

No, though! By thunder, no! *Molly*, they're talking of *Molly*!

She was the wife of one, the sister-in-law of the other. Years have almost outlawed that inequality. To each she comes back all comeliness, all docile bravery, all grace. A woman of those days.

"Remember Molly that night, Isaiah? You couldn't see her, though, and you stuck under the skiff; the way she come trippin' down from nowheres, fetch one look at your boots croppin' out like a hamstrung turtle, set down on the skiff, tidied her skirts out over, and set there gazing at the stars as soberlike as if she was in the habit of stargazin' every night with a shotgun laid across her lap. Nor you couldn't see the way old Revenue Perkins eyed her and hesitated, scrawn out his neck and fetch to a halt."

"I heard him, though, Andy; promise you that. 'Pleasant evenin', Mis' Brewster!' 'Pleasant evenin', Mr. Perkins!' 'I'm aimin' to have a look in under that skiff, if you don't mind, Mis' Brewster?' 'In which case, Mr. Perkins, you're aimin' to do something you ain't able; not so long's I'm settin' on to it.' 'In which case, Mis' Brewster, I shall have the law on to the lot of you——' 'In which case, Mr. Perkins, I'll have something a sight quicker actin' than the law on to *you*, sir.' (With that I hear the gun butt easin'

up along the garboard strake.) 'Quit it, Molly Brewster,' says Perkins. 'Git, Eben Perkins,' says Molly, 'and git quick!' "

"And Revenue gat! I *guess* he gat!"

"Never hear the last of it, did he? Nor come snoopin' *this* way again, eh?"

"Feared o' meetin' up with Molly! Heh-heh!"

"The gentlest and abidin'est of women! Heh-heh-heh!"

The gentlest, the abindingest of women! What homage could be more precious to the heroine of long ago than this cachinnation of old men, this mirth flung out in thready challenge to reconquering nothingness and the prowling powers of the dark?

The dark answers, coagulating in another shade at their feet, downhill.

"What you doin' here, you guys?"

Their mouths dry and fall agape.

"Well, I v-v-vow!" bleats Isaiah, and Andy echoes him: "I vow!"

"Oh," breathes the shade, "I know now. It's old Isaiah and old Andy."

"But who in—in—are *you*?"

"Don't you rec'nize me? It's Tony Fuller from the Coast Guard. You know me."

"*Tony!*" They see their chance. "*Tony Fuller!*" The impostor is delivered into their hands. Their voices break high. "There wa'n't never a man—there's been Eds and Ezras, Johns and Jonathans—but never a man amongst the Fullers called by any such nigger name, such a lemon-peddlin' name, as 'Tony.' No-sir-ee!"

The haunt chuckles, rubbing his lips with a spectral sleeve.

"Try Farquiera then; that's my family's name when they come from the Azores. Or if you're bent on crackin' your jaws, try 'em on this guy Soblef-sky—Sub-lof-sky—whatever 'tis. He's down in the road to the left, waitin'; so you get along now, quiet, and tell him I sent you, and he'll leave you through. Skedaddle, my boys; clear out o' here!"

If there is one there are a dozen retorts, just at their scandalized lips; arrogant laughter, withering old quarter-deck oaths. Dumbly, though, sending down a whispering lace of sand, like autumnal spiders, they flee as they are told, not knowing why. They get off the cliff, their own cliff, not knowing how; a lichenous ground is underfoot, then a streak half clay, then, nuts. A wind, a slow draft redolent of clam and weed, bears them along; an air familiar as the years of their youth, turned secret and queer. It bears them into the mouth of a hollow floored with blackness and roofed with stars. Sergeant Belkar Soblievski of the State Police snaps on the headlight of his motorcycle and examines them with his yellow cornucopia of flame.

"You're out late, my friends." Then, not meaning the light-blistered couple to stand there all night, he says in a kindlier tone: "Go right on, the way you were going, my fathers, and keep your mouths shut, and no harm done. Good night."

It is some moments before he snaps off the snooping light. Behind Isaiah

and Andy, across the wheel track to the Eden of their ancestral Cove, the ray hangs horizontal, like a lazy angel's flaming sword.

Here come the willows out of the hill. There's a moon somewhere under the eastern ocean, and its foreglow, refracting from the zenith, describes with faint silver the slopes of the roof, the two fat chimneys, the fence.

So it's home they're coming after all.

Their boots drag; soul and body they're beat, the pair of them, dead beat.

The house opens and swallows them. No need of a lamp; they can find their beds in the dark. Mind the table, Isaiah. Take care of that swayed door; it's got to be fixed, no two ways. Here's the chair for Andy, and here's the chair for Isaiah, to drape their coats and trousers over, their shirts and drawers.

There's nothing left but sleep, then. Sound sleep. Sweet dreams.

Isaiah, the youngster of the two, lies on his back, toes up, wide awake. Andy, across the room, lies toes up too, counting sheep. One sheep over the fence; two sheep over the fence; three sheep over the fence. There's a nigger-looking fellow herding them. Land! he's got no head. Manny the Lisbon! That's a dirty port, Lisbon. And he had the gall to say—this headless Portugee Eyetalian fly-by-night—

What's that? There! Again! Passing like spirit footfalls across the turf outside!

The hall clock is still—still these years—but Molly's alarm clock sends in a tunny cheeping from the kitchen. Where can Molly be?

Five sheep over the fence; six sheep over the—

"What's that? Andy!"

"Yes, Isaiah?"

Isaiah slides out of bed, tiptoes across the chamber, creeps in beside his elder brother. Neither of them says anything. It's nearly seventy years since Isaiah did that. But neither of them speaks.

They're not used to lying awake. It's this night. This night of supernal license, weird air quakes, invasions crepuscular and fleering of little peoples from beyond the pale.

Seven sheep over the fence—

"What's wrong, boy?"

"I hear a mosquito in the room, dang him, and I can't sleep."

"Pshaw, Isaiah, now you turn over and shut your eyes and—" Andy sits bolt up, a listener. "Hark!"

Thud! A fault in the atmosphere, small, echoless. A gunshot, unmistakable. Thud! Thud! Thud! An imponderable fusillade.

Is it ghosts, in this land of the dead? Memories? All inside the brain?

Andy tries Isaiah: "Isaiah, did you hear anything?"

The youngster lies there with the quilt tight over his chest. It's a terrible thing, when you've been equal to anything and everything, to find yourself suddenly like this. His voice comes as thin as eel grass:

"Where's that girl?"

It's too much for Andy, and he joins in: "Why don't she ever come home? What's she thinkin' on, this hour of the night?"

"'Tain't decent, Andy. What'll folks say?"

"What does she care for that?"

"What does she care if she keeps us wakin' for her?"

"Who are *we*, anyhow? What do *we* 'mount to?"

"What does anything 'mount to these days; anything but cavortin' about with foreigners, dancin', huggin' maybe, carryin' on, forgettin' your religion, your elders, your upbringing—anything to make the time go quick?"

"And devil take the hindmost!"

There's a cry, chambered in a distance. The devil taking the hindmost, perhaps. The empty moors and dunes where men used to live give it out; one lone articulation, anger, terror, mortal pain, who can tell from the spent whisper creeping in through the Brewster blinds?

"A-n-d-y, I wish—I wish that girl was to 'home."

"I—I wish she was."

The shame of it, confessed at last, mutually, out loud! Isaiah Brewster, who in the name of the Great Republic stood up on his feet and told the portbushaw of the Emperor of Siam to go to Jericho! Andy Brewster, who with his own hands put half his ciew in irons at the height of the Seventy-one Typhoon! The two of them now, praying nothing but the sound of Molly's dance shoes on the floor beyond the wall; the comfort of even Molly's doomsday youthfulness under the roof with them!

Prayers aren't half-ton trucks, though, for beggars to ride.

Or are they? Wait!

Isaiah is up now, sitting as bolt and gray as Andy.

Another mosquito? No. Hardly louder than a mosquito, to be sure, and oddly like the insect's silky whine—that whine of springs and beams and gaskets, all in one, a mile away.

"'Tis him!"

"'Tis! 'Tis!"

"He's to the marsh now—or—or no——"

"N-n-no—no—— Isaiah!"

"You mean it don't sound like 'twas on——"

"'Tain't on. 'Tain't on any road I know of, Isaiah. That's clear to the north'rd somewheres. Sounds to me——"

"Sounds to me like it was all adrift somewheres up Borneo Plain——"

Thud! The shadow of the phantom of a shot! That's gone. So is the whine, like the whirl of a nighthawk planing back into the night again.

"Isaiah," says Andy, "you lay down and go to sleep. This is foolishness." Five minutes, up they knife again.

A step. A clandestine sole on the porch. A sneaking tread.

Andy wouldn't speak for a million dollars; neither would Isaiah.

"Molly!" they call in the same breath.

No answer. Only the scratch of a match, out the kitchen way.

"Molly Brewster!"

The match goes out. More footfalls. Odd footfalls. Odd chills. Who? What?

The second match is at the very foot of their bed, a blinding nimbus. In the nimbus there are two eyes, a lean, green-brown face, a hat like an inverted flower pot made of kinky wool.

"You ghat ahny rags, say?"

When Isaiah was mate in the Boston fruit-bark *Hope Wade* he used once a year to load figs at Smyrna. He used to sit in an armchair on the house within one spit of the rail and keep those natives going as only a Cape man could, with alternate volleys of truculence and wit. "If there's one thing I'd love to see before I die," he used to say, "it's one of you lazy heathen Turk-fellahs tryin' to earn a meal in the town of Pamet, Barnstable County, Mass. If there's one thing I'd love!"

It comes back to Isaiah, every fatal syllable. The white rims widen around his eyes. He begins to speak.

"You're that Turk——"

"Curse the Toork? He kelled my fahther, my mahther, my brahther!"

"No-sir, though, no-sir, all foolin', you're the one—the one folks c-c-calls the Turk—that comes by sellin' carpets. You are so!"

A frown withers the green-brown face.

"You gaht ahny rags, say? You gaht ahny rags?"

The match burns a finger and sails away in two red stars, blown by an Asian oath. In reverse the business of footfalls reenacted, across the kitchen, across the porch.

The night has overreached itself. "Got any rags?" That's a joke.

There's a glimmer of moon through the cracks in the blinds. In the wraith of light Andy lifts on an elbow and studies supine Isaiah. The youngster lies with his head cracked back, as though by a blow, his mouth open, the shape of a black egg, and his whisker thrust straight up in the air. He's not dead, though; he's asleep.

Andy lies back and summons all his resolution. Resolutely he envisions sheep, just such sheep as Dave Burch used to run on Borneo Plain, matted gray-brown bodies and slender legs snapping under them. Over the stone wall they go. One sheep over; two sheep over; three sheep over; four—or was it five?—five—six sheep——

When he awakens it is with a gulp and a kick.

Who's that? By the bed there, towering in the new gray?

It's Isaiah. It's the youngster, getting his pants on.

"I can't stand it," says Isaiah, his teeth aclatter.

"What is it *now*?"

"I don't know. My Godfrey, if I knowed, I—there! Hark to that!"

"That trompin' like?"

"Trompin', yes. Trompin', skitterin', skutterin' all about, whisperin' too, and groanin' into the bargain. There now! Will y'hark?"

"In the wood house. Or more like Molly's room. Mebby it's Molly."

"I want to know."

"Or cats."

"I want to know."

Andy fumbles his pale legs out of the quilt and into his trousers. They go in stocking feet, carrying their boots. In the kitchen Andy pauses.

"Molly come home?"

"Never hear her."

"You been asleep, though."

"I ain't. Not one blessed wink, and that's true. No-sir, everything I seen, I seen. There's niggers and heathen and all manner of islanders and dagoes spiritin' about, this night. Andy, there was a Turk come into our room, and I seen him with my own two eyes. So I ain't been asleep."

"I'll look in her room, anyway, on the chance."

Holding his breath, he edges open Molly's door. His head disappears. It reappears, the cheeks collapsing with relief.

"By glory, she *be*. Here all this time, to bed, asleep. Us fools!"

Side by side, holding the door open, they gaze into the little chamber, cave-lit with the seepage of dawn, perfumed with violet water, tar soap, carnation powder, fiber-silk stockings, and all the faint, mingled emanations from frocks and underthings—the rectangular gray whiteness of the bed—the dark spot of a head averted on the pillow.

"Don't wake 'er."

"No; easy's the word; take care."

The old fools!

"Molly!" breathes Andy, just once. Just to try.

The head on the pillow flops over. The heads in the door thrust out.

Black eyes study them from the pillow, hypnotized.

Jimmy the Greek!

If he is hypnotized, what are they?

It was in this room, in that bed, that Molly White Brewster died, on Cleveland's election day. It was through that window her soul went to heaven.

They can do nothing but stare; stare at the bureau, holy of holies, untidy, intimate; a pot of cold cream, a ribbon, a note, a garter, a kitten of combings, a man's plaid cap; stare at the bed, the pillow, the solitary presence there, obscurely begotten, horde-born, Mediterranean.

They open their mouths to roar like lions; in the hush they bleat.

"Where's M-M-Molly?"

He holds them with black-and-white eyes; he has lost his tongue.

"Wh-wh-wh-where's *Molly*?"

It's Molly that answers, Molly's feet askip on the porch behind them, the

wind of her coming across the kitchen, the fling of her arms brushing them aside like wraiths.

Worse than wraiths! Of a sudden something beyond accounting happens. In Molly's bedroom they've always kept the old paper, spotty and faded as it is; funny old paper, peopled by Venetian boatmen and early Victorian trees. And now between two breaths Andy and Isaiah are pictures with the boatmen and memories with the trees. It is as though still visible, no one saw them; as though reality had abandoned them and gone out into the middle of the room.

Molly is real; they're not. Tag end of a race and a tradition, her docked hair tousled, her shoes streaked with mud from another county, hem of a torn petticoat at the trail, she's flesh alive; a tradition and a race beginning.

She's on the bed's edge, hip and elbow, one wild hand in Jimmy Krenk's black curls, combwise, questioning, and her breath against his cheek.

"Y'all right, kid? Tell me quicker'n quick: Y'all right?"

"Are *you* all right, Moll; you tell *me*?"

"You should worry about me! Do I look sick?"

"But, Moll——"

"Shush, kid, I know. I look like a homemade hangover, I know I do, but you got to consider a hundred 'n' thirty miles in that bus of yours is no *thé dansant* for a fair young thing, is it now? 'Specially the last fifteen of 'em on a rim. Cheer up; I'll look good when I get a shot of coffee in me. And don't worry about the stuff; I got it all safe and dark to you-know-who, you-know-where, thirty-one cases, check, and you couldn't have made it snappier yourself, you poor angel, and that's that. And the bus is back in Costa's g'rage with the old plates on—and the clutch afloat—and that phony rear shoe gone to hell and that's that. And that motorcycle egg was into Yarmouth Hospital at three, I just got word at the marsh, with his right arm out of commish. And that's that."

"Was it you, Moll? Was it you plugged the guy, same's Turkey says?"

"Well, if I didn't, there's been some awful mistake. I picked up your gun when you dropped it, and I was peeved. But say, don't get me talkin'——"

"Listen, Moll, tell me somethin'. Was it you carried me up here from the Cove, same's Turkey says?"

"Well, Turkey helped some—as quick as he——"

"Where was the other guys?"

"Busy, don't you forget. Who'd' you s'pose got the cop crowd trailed off down Truro way? Jazzy work for a while. But now, Jim, how's the bean?"

"Bean's bright."

It's the strangest sensation, being a Venetian boatman inked on moldy wall paper, harkening to unintelligible tongues.

"And the leg?"

"Absitively perfect limb."

"Turkey get it bandaged right? That petticoat of mine I slammed on——"

"Coold not find ahny rahgs."

Reality spreads with the growing dawn. It's the Armenian himself, down on his hams on the carpet beyond the bed.

"No rags? Turkey, you're a bird! But listen—my God! You mean to say that plugged leg is still— Oh, you poor lamb! Now, listen, Jim; I'll go as easy, as easy, but I got to give it a look."

The painted boatmen close their painted eyes. Their painted ears they can not close. Earth swarms. Their painted minds they can not get quite shut. Murmurs. Fragments. The land of the old, the turncoat, teems with pitiless voices of the young. Rumors creep in through the windows.

"Doc and the priest ought to be coming——"

"—No, Gabriel phoned the priest he needn't come. Jim's all right."

"He'll be all right, that is, if we can keep him doggo for a spell——"

"—But what they'll say up-Cape when he don't show up at short-stop for the Legion in the Barnstable game next Sunday——"

"Oh, we can bull through it somehow— Hey, what's that?"

Another kind of a murmur; a high, faint throbbing in the air.

"Molly! Inside there! Here comes Doc Bader from Provincetown. I guess it's him, anyway; it sounds like Gaspa's seaplane. I'll slide up to the pond and show him the way."

Still another note, within the room, this one, half crooning:

"Good kid, did I hurt? Oh, good kid, I tried to be so gentle——"

"Gentle, Moll? Don't talk. You're the gentlest ever; and you're more'n the gentlest; you're the beautifulest, and you're more'n the beautifulest; you're the straightest, bravest——"

"Bravest! Quit kiddin', you Greek idiot. I been frightened sober; I'm still scared weak. Take hold of me and hang onto me tight, tight."

"I got yu, tight. All there is, though, I hate to be a bother here."

"Bother! That's a good line. It's my house, isn't it, Jimmy dearie? And seeing we're going to get married Friday, where's the diff?"

(Friday at two!)

The Venetian boatmen end their fading by fading quite away, out of the bedroom, out of the house.

It's a fog-dawn, the light from the sun-tipped hills coming down at every angle, through the pearly smother. It's as if the night, in place of ending, had just bleached out. Albino darkness. White shades. The veil is troubled by them, half-glimpsed and gone; white shades of youth, black-eyed and swarthy, sallow and gray-eyed.

Once more Andy and Isaiah flee the canopy of the willows and puff up Sheep Hill. The mist dilutes; at the height they find the sun and air. And the sea, Leviathan gone. The honest sea.

They flop on a timber and gaze at it. By and by Isaiah points a finger at the wedge of the Cove, still in the shadow below them.

"By cricky, she goes fast these days, Andy." He is resolved to see it, and he sees it; the marsh growing an estuary, the estuary a strait, a worm of

blue salt water eating ever and ever more hungrily into the entrails of the dead Cape. "By cricky, 'twon't be many years till you can sail a vessel straight through the Hollow to the back side."

"Where do you get that stuff?" inquires a voice from behind the brothers. They won't have it. They won't hear.

"'Twa'n't so many years ago," says Andy in resolute musing, "there was beach plums growin' out there where them breakers are now."

"The hell there was!" A shadow falls across them, and out over their heads, blue and amber, floats the cloud of a cigaret. It's Frankie Silvado, the surfman from Pamet Station, and he has a purple mustache and dark, live, ardent eyes. He might have yellow eyes and green whiskers for all Andy and Isaiah: they won't see him and they don't see him.

Andy clears an indomitable throat: "Accordin' to my calc'lations, Isaiah, the way she's sinkin' now——"

"That's a lovely pipe, that is," persists the tactless shade. "I been patrolin' this shore ten years and more, and I used to have to walk on the cliff because the tide was all over where them grass flats is now. You old geezers ain't up with the times, or you'd know all this land is makin' all the while. There was a pr'fessor lectured to Provincetown last Summer, and he says, like's not, it'll be all dry ground from here clean to Plymouth shore one day, with woods, like's not, and farms, and cities——"

Cities! The brothers are betrayed. From one to the other passes a sage and soundless guffaw.

"Though," adds Silvado, "I don't know what kind o' people there'll be to live in 'em, the way things are goin' now with this Cape crowd, gettin' to be smugglers—runnin' in liquor off these West Indie vessels for all they're worth—women as bad as the men, too, accordin' to what Tony Fuller says he seen last night. I tell you the truth, I don't know what this country of ourn is comin' to."

By and by Andy turns an eye on Isaiah, and once more, with dogmatic patience, clears his throat.

"As I was sayin'—the way she's sinkin' now—and the way they're droppin' off—Sam yesterday—like's not you or me to-morrow—'twon't be so long now before there won't be any left hereabouts."

"Any what?"

Curse and double curse that Ginny! Like drops of water on the skull it grows suddenly too much,

"Any folks!" cried Isaiah.

"Any folks?"

Now they upend on their reedy legs and face him and lash out at him.

"Any—any—*Americans!*"

In the white pouring of the sunshine, as they watch greedily the effect of that brutal blow, the red mottles go out of their cheeks. Now, at last, they are terrified. This fellow doesn't even know what they're driving at.

"What do you mean?" he puzzles. "What do you mean—*Americans?*"

NIGHT CLUB¹

by Katharine Brush

PROMPTLY at quarter of ten P.M. Mrs. Brady descended the steps of the Elevated. She purchased from the newsdealer in the cubbyhole beneath them a next month's magazine and a to-morrow morning's paper and, with these tucked under one plump arm, she walked. She walked two blocks north on Sixth Avenue; turned and went west. But not far west. Westward half a block only, to the place where the gay green awning marked *Club Français* paints a stripe of shade across the glimmering sidewalk. Under this awning Mrs. Brady halted briefly, to remark to the six-foot doorman that it looked like rain and to await his performance of his professional duty. When the small green door yawned open she sighed deeply and plodded in.

The foyer was a blackness, an airless velvet blackness like the inside of a jeweler's box. Four drum-shaped lamps of golden silk suspended from the ceiling gave it light (a very little) and formed the jewels: gold signets, those, or cuff-links for a giant. At the far end of the foyer there were black stairs, faintly dusty, rippling upward toward an amber radiance. Mrs. Brady approached and ponderously mounted the stairs, clinging with one fist to the mangy velvet rope that railed their edge.

From the top, Miss Lena Levin observed the ascent. Miss Levin was the checkroom girl. She had dark-at-the-roots blond hair and slender hips upon which, in moments of leisure she wore her hands, like buckles of ivory loosely attached. This was a moment of leisure. Miss Levin waited behind her counter. Row upon row of hooks, empty as yet, and seeming to beckon—wee curved fingers of iron—waited behind her.

"Late," said Miss Levin, "again."

"Go wan!" said Mrs. Brady. "It's only ten to ten. *Whew! Them stairs!*"

She leaned heavily, sideways, against Miss Levin's counter and, applying one palm to the region of her heart, appeared at once to listen and to count. "Feel!" she cried then in a pleased voice.

Miss Levin obediently felt.

"Them stairs," continued Mrs. Brady darkly, "with my bad heart, will be the death of me. *Whew! Well, dearie! What's the news?*"

"You got a paper," Miss Levin languidly reminded her.

"Yeah!" agreed Mrs. Brady with sudden vehemence. "I got a paper!" She slapped it upon the counter. "An' a lot of time I'll get to *read* my paper, won't I now? On a Saturday night!" she moaned. "Other nights is bad enough, dear knows—but *Saturday* nights! How I dread 'em! Every Saturday night I say to my daughter, I say, 'Geraldine, I can't,' I say, 'I can't go through it

¹ From *Harper's Magazine*, 1927. By permission of the author.

again, an' that's all there is to it,' I say. 'I'll *quit*,' I say, An' I *will*, too!" added Mrs. Brady firmly, if indefinitely.

Miss Levin, in defense of Saturday nights, mumbled some vague something about tips.

"Tips!" Mrs. Brady hissed it. She almost spat it. Plainly money was nothing, nothing at all, to this lady. "I just wish," said Mrs. Brady and glared at Miss Levin, "I just wish *you* had to spend one Saturday night, just one, in that dressing room! Bein' pushed an' stepped on and near knocked down by that gang of hussies, an' them orderin' an' bossin' you 'round like you was *black*, an' usin' your things an' then sayin' they're sorry, they got no change, they'll be back. Yah! They *never* come back!"

"There's Mr. Costello," whispered Miss Levin through lips that, like a ventriloquist's, scarcely stirred.

"An' as I was sayin'," Mrs. Brady said at once brightly, "I got to leave you. Ten to ten, time I was on the job."

She smirked at Miss Levin, nodded, and right-about-faced. There, indeed, Mr. Costello was. Mr. Billy Costello, manager, proprietor, monarch of all he surveyed. From the doorway of the big room, where the little tables herded in a ring around the waxen floor, he surveyed Mrs. Brady, and in such a way that Mrs. Brady, momentarily forgetting her bad heart, walked fast, scurried faster, almost ran.

The door of her domain was set politely in an alcove, beyond silken curtains looped up at the sides. Mrs. Brady reached it breathless, shouldered it open, and groped for the electric switch. Lights sprang up, a bright white blaze, intolerable for an instant to the eyes, like sun on snow. Blinking, Mrs. Brady shut the door.

The room was a spotless, white-tiled place, half beauty shop, half dressing room. Along one wall stood washstands, sturdy triplets in a row, with pale-green liquid soap in glass balloons afloat above them. Against the opposite wall there was a couch. A third wall backed an elongated glass-topped dressing table; and over the dressing table and over the washstands long rectangular sheets of mirror reflected lights, doors, glossy tiles, lights multiplied. . . .

Mrs. Brady moved across this glitter like a thick dark cloud in a hurry. At the dressing table she came to a halt, and upon it she laid her newspaper, her magazine, and her purse—a black purse worn gray with much clutching. She divested herself of a rusty black coat and a hat of the mushroom persuasion, and hung both up in a corner cupboard which she opened by means of one of a quite preposterous bunch of keys. From a nook in the cupboard she took down a lace-edged handkerchief with long streamers. She untied the streamers and tied them again around her chunky black alpaca waist. The handkerchief became an apron's baby cousin.

Mrs. Brady relocked the cupboard door, fumbled her keyring over, and unlocked a capacious drawer of the dressing table. She spread a fresh towel on the plate-glass top, in the geometrical center, and upon the towel she arranged with care a procession of things fished from the drawer. Things for the hair.

Things for the complexion. Things for the eyes, the lashes, the brows, the lips, and the finger nails. Things in boxes and things in jars and things in tubes and tins. Also, an ash tray, matches, pins, a tiny sewing kit, a pair of scissors. Last of all, a hand-printed sign, a nudging sort of sign:

NOTICE!

These articles, placed here for your convenience, are the property of the *maid*.

And directly beneath the sign, propping it up against the looking-glass, a china saucer, in which Mrs. Brady now slyly laid decoy money: two quarters and two dimes, in four-leaf-clover formation.

Another drawer of the dressing table yielded a bottle of bromo seltzer, a bottle of aromatic spirits of ammonia, a tin of sodium bicarbonate, and a teaspoon. These were lined up on a shelf above the couch.

Mrs. Brady was now ready for anything. And (from the grim, thin pucker of her mouth) expecting it.

Music came to her ears. Rather, the beat of music, muffled, rhythmic, remote. *Umpa-um, umpa-um, umpa-um-mm*— Mr. "Fiddle" Baer and his band, hard at work on the first fox-trot of the night. It was teasing, foot-tapping music; but the large solemn feet of Mrs. Brady were still. She sat on the couch and opened her newspaper; and for some moments she read uninterruptedly, with special attention to the murders, the divorces, the breaches of promise, the funnies.

Then the door swung inward, admitting a blast of Mr. "Fiddle" Baer's best, a whiff of perfume, and a girl.

Mrs. Brady put her paper away.

The girl was *petite* and darkly beautiful; wrapped in fur and mounted on tall jeweled heels. She entered humming the ragtime song the orchestra was playing, and while she stood near the dressing table, stripping off her gloves, she continued to hum it softly to herself:

"Oh, I know my baby loves me,
I can tell my baby loves me."

Here the dark little girl got the left glove off, and Mrs. Brady glimpsed a platinum wedding ring.

"Cause there ain't no maybe
In my baby's
Eyes."

The right glove came off. The dark little girl sat down in one of the chairs that faced the dressing table. She doffed her wrap, casting it carelessly over the chair-back. It had a cloth-of-gold lining, and "Paris" was embroidered in curlicues on the label. Mrs. Brady hovered solicitously near.

The dark little girl, still humming, looked over the articles "placed here for your convenience," and picked up the scissors. Having cut off a very small hangnail with the air of one performing a perilous major operation, she

seized and used the manicure buffer, and after that the eyebrow pencil. Mrs. Brady's mind, hopefully calculating the tip, jumped and jumped again like a taximeter.

"Oh, I know my baby loves me. . . ."

The dark little girl applied powder and lipstick belonging to herself. She examined the result searchingly in the mirror and sat back, satisfied. She cast some silver *Klink! Klink!* into Mrs. Brady's saucer, and half rose. Then, remembering something, she settled down again.

The ensuing thirty seconds were spent by her in pulling off her platinum wedding ring, tying it in a corner of a lace handkerchief, and tucking the handkerchief down the bodice of her tight white-velvet gown.

"There!" she said.

She swooped up her wrap and trotted toward the door, jeweled heels merrily twinkling.

"Cause there ain't no maybe——"

The door fell shut.

Almost instantly it opened again, and another girl came in. A blonde, this. She was pretty in a round-eyed babyish way; but Mrs. Brady, regarding her, mentally grabbed the spirits of ammonia bottle. For she looked terribly ill. The round eyes were dull, the pretty, silly little face was drawn. The thin hands, picking at the fastenings of a spacious bag, trembled and twitched.

Mrs. Brady cleared her throat. "Can I do something for you, Miss?"

Evidently the blonde girl had believed herself alone in the dressing room. Panic, and something else. Something very like murderous hate—but for an instant only, so that Mrs. Brady, whose perceptions were never quick, missed it altogether.

"A glass of water?" suggested Mrs. Brady.

"No," said the girl, "no." She had one hand in the beaded bag now. Mrs. Brady could see it moving, causing the bag to squirm like a live thing, and the fringe to shiver. "Yes!" she cried abruptly. "A glass of water—please—you get it for me."

She dropped onto the couch. Mrs. Brady scurried to the water cooler in the corner, pressed the spigot with a determined thumb. Water trickled out thinly. Mrs. Brady pressed harder, and scowled, and thought, "Something's wrong with this thing. I mustn't forget, next time I see Mr. Costello——"

When again she faced her patient, the patient was sitting erect. She was thrusting her clenched hand back into the beaded bag again.

She took only a sip of the water, but it seemed to help her quite miraculously. Almost at once color came to her cheeks, life to her eyes. She grew young again—as young as she was. She smiled up at Mrs. Brady.

"Well!" she exclaimed. "What do you know about that!" She shook her honey-colored head. "I can't imagine what came over me."

"Are you better now?" inquired Mrs. Brady.

"Yes. Oh, yes, I'm better now. You see," said the blonde girl confidentially, "we were at the theater, my boy friend and I, and it was hot and stuffy—I

guess that must have been the trouble." She paused, and the ghost of her recent distress crossed her face. "God! I thought that last act *never* would end!" she said.

While she attended to her hair and complexion she chattered gayly to Mrs. Brady, chattered on with scarcely a stop for breath, and laughed much. She said, among other things, that she and her "boy friend" had not known one another very long, but that she was "ga-ga" about him. "He is about me, too," she confessed. "He thinks I'm grand."

She fell silent then, and in the looking-glass her eyes were shadowed, haunted. But Mrs. Brady, from where she stood, could not see the looking-glass; and half a minute later the blonde girl laughed and began again. When she went out she seemed to dance out on little winged feet; and Mrs. Brady, sighing, thought it must be nice to be young . . . and happy like that.

The next arrivals were two. A tall, extremely smart young woman in black chiffon entered first, and held the door open for her companion; and the instant the door was shut, she said, as though it had been on the tip of her tongue for hours, "Amy, what under the sun *happened?*"

Amy, who was brown-eyed, brown-bobbed-haired, and patently annoyed with something, crossed to the dressing table and flopped into a chair before she made reply.

"Nothing," she said wearily then.

"That's nonsense!" snorted the other. "Tell me. Was it something she said? She's a tactless ass, of course. Always was."

"No, not anything she said. It was——" Amy bit her lip. "All right! I'll tell you. Before we left your apartment I just happened to notice that Tom had disappeared. So I went to look for him—I wanted to ask him if he'd remembered to tell the maid where we were going—Skippy's subject to croup, you know, and we always leave word. Well, so I went into the kitchen, thinking Tom might be there mixing cocktails—and there he was—and there *she* was!"

The full red mouth of the other young woman pursed itself slightly. Her arched brows lifted. "Well?"

Her matter-of-factness appeared to infuriate Amy. "He was *kissing* her!" she flung out.

"Well?" said the other again. She chuckled softly and patted Amy's shoulder, as if it were the shoulder of a child. "You're surely not going to let *that* spoil your whole evening? Amy *dear*! Kissing may once have been serious and significant—but it isn't nowadays. Nowadays, it's like shaking hands. It means nothing."

But Amy was not consoled. "I hate her!" she cried desperately. "Red-headed *thing*! Calling me 'darling' and 'honey', and s-sending me handkerchiefs for C-Christmas—and then sneaking off behind closed doors and k-Kissing my h-h-husband. . . ."

At this point Amy quite broke down, but she recovered herself sufficiently to add with venom, "I'd like to slap her!"

"Oh, oh, oh," smiled the tall young woman, "I wouldn't do that!"

Amy wiped her eyes with what might well have been one of the Christmas handkerchiefs, and confronted her friend. "Well, what *would* you do, Claire? If you were I?"

"I'd forget it," said Claire, "and have a good time. I'd kiss somebody myself. You've no idea how much better you'd feel!"

"I don't do——" Amy began indignantly; but as the door behind her opened and a third young woman—red-headed, earringed, exquisite—lilted in, she changed her tone. "Oh, hello!" she called sweetly, beaming at the newcomer via the mirror. "We were wondering what had become of you!"

The red-headed girl, smiling easily back, dropped her cigarette on the floor and crushed it out with a silver-shod toe. "Tom and I were talking to 'Fiddle' Baer," she explained. "He's going to play 'Clap Yo' Hands' next, because it's my favorite. Lend me a comb, will you, somebody?"

"There's a comb there," said Claire, indicating Mrs. Brady's business comb.

"But imagine using it!" murmured the red-headed girl. "Amy darling, haven't you one?"

Amy produced a tiny comb from her rhinestone purse. "Don't forget to bring it when you come," she said, and stood up. "I'm going on out; I want to tell Tom something."

She went.

The red-headed young woman and the tall black-chiffon one were alone, except for Mrs. Brady. The red-headed one beaded her incredible lashes. The tall one, the one called Claire, sat watching her. Presently she said, "Sylvia, look here." And Sylvia looked. Anybody, addressed in that tone, would have.

"There is one thing," Claire went on quietly, holding the other's eyes, "that I want understood. And that is, '*Hands off!*' Do you hear me?"

"I don't know what you mean."

"You do know what I mean!"

The red-headed girl shrugged her shoulders. "Amy told you she saw us, I suppose."

"Precisely. And," went on Claire, gathering up her possessions and rising, "as I said before, you're to keep away." Her eyes blazed sudden white-hot rage. "Because, as you very well know, he belongs to me," she said and departed, slamming the door.

Between eleven o'clock and one Mrs. Brady was very busy indeed. Never for more than a moment during those two hours was the dressing room empty. Often it was jammed, full to overflowing with curled cropped heads, with ivory arms and shoulders, with silk and lace and chiffon, with legs. The door flapped in and back, in and back. The mirrors caught and held—and lost—a hundred different faces. Powder veiled the dressing table with a thin white dust; cigarette stubs, scarlet at the tips, choked the ash-receiver. Dimes and quarters clattered into Mrs. Brady's saucer—and were transferred to Mrs.

Brady's purse. The original seventy cents remained. That much, and no more, would Mrs. Brady gamble on the integrity of womankind.

She earned her money. She threaded needles and took stitches. She powdered the backs of necks. She supplied towels for soapy, dripping hands. She removed a speck from a teary blue eye and pounded the heel on a slipper. She curled the straggling ends of a black bob and a gray bob, pinned a velvet flower on a lithe round waist, mixed three doses of bicarbonate of soda, took charge of a shed pink-satin girdle, collected, on hands and knees, several dozen fake pearls that had wept from a broken string.

She served chorus girls and school girls, gay young matrons and gayer young mistresses, a lady who had divorced four husbands, and a lady who had poisoned one, the secret (more or less) sweetheart of a Most Distinguished Name, and the Brains of a bootleg gang—She saw things. She saw a yellow check, with the ink hardly dry. She saw four tiny bruises, such as fingers might make, on an arm. She saw a girl strike another girl, not playfully. She saw a bundle of letters some man wished he had not written, safe and deep in a brocaded handbag.

About midnight the door flew open and at once was pushed shut, and a gray-eyed, lovely child stood backed against it, her palms flattened on the panels at her sides, the draperies of her white chiffon gown settling lightly to rest around her.

There were already five damsels of varying ages in the dressing room. The latest arrival marked their presence with a flick of her eyes, and, standing just where she was, she called peremptorily, "Maid!"

Mrs. Brady, standing just where *she* was, said, "Yes, Miss?"

"Please come here," said the girl.

Mrs. Brady, as slowly as she dared, did so.

The girl lowered her voice to a tense half-whisper. "Listen! Is there any way I can get out of here except through this door I came in?"

Mrs. Brady stared at her stupidly.

"Any window?" persisted the girl. "Or anything?"

Here they were interrupted by the exodus of two of the damsels-of-varying ages. Mrs. Brady opened the door for them—and in so doing caught a glimpse of a man who waited in the hall outside, a debonair, old-young man with a girl's furry wrap hung over his arm, and his hat in his hand.

The door clicked. The gray-eyed girl moved out from the wall, against which she had flattened herself—for all the world like one eluding pursuit in a cinema.

"What about that window?" she demanded, pointing.

"That's all the farther it opens," said Mrs. Brady.

"Oh! And it's the only one—isn't it?"

"It is."

"Damn," said the girl. "Then there's *no* way out?"

"No way but the door," said Mrs. Brady testily.

The girl looked at the door. She seemed to look *through* the door, and to despise and to fear what she saw. Then she looked at Mrs. Brady. "Well," she said, "then I s'pose the only thing to do is to stay in here."

She stayed. Minutes ticked by. Jazz crooned distantly, stopped, struck up again. Other girls came and went. Still the gray-eyed girl sat on the couch, with her back to the wall and her shapely legs crossed, smoking cigarettes, one from the stub of another.

After a long while she said, "Maid!"

"Yes, Miss?"

"Peek out that door, will you, and see if there's anyone standing there."

Mrs. Brady peeked, and reported that there was. There was a gentleman with a little bit of a black mustache standing there. The same gentleman, in fact, who was standing there "just after you come in."

"Oh, Lord," sighed the gray-eyed girl. "Well . . . I can't stay here all *night*, that's one sure thing."

She slid off the couch, and went listlessly to the dressing table. There she occupied herself for a minute or two. Suddenly, without a word, she darted out.

Thirty seconds later Mrs. Brady was elated to find two crumpled one-dollar bills lying in her saucer. Her joy, however, died a premature death. For she made an almost simultaneous second discovery. A saddening one. Above all, a puzzling one.

"Now what for," marveled Mrs. Brady, "did she want to walk off with them *scissors*?"

This at twelve-twenty-five.

At twelve-thirty a quartette of excited young things burst in, babbling madly. All of them had their evening wraps with them; all talked at once. One of them, a Dresden-china girl with a heart-shaped face, was the center of attention. Around her the rest fluttered like monstrous butterflies; to her they addressed their shrill exclamatory cries. "Babe," they called her.

Mrs. Brady heard snatches: "Not in this state unless. . . ." "Well, you can in Maryland, Jimmy says." "Oh, there must be some place nearer than. . . ." "Isn't this *marvelous*?" "When did it happen, Baby? When did you decide?"

"Just now," the girl with the heart-shaped face sang softly, "when we were dancing."

The babble resumed. "But listen, Babe, what'll your mother and father? . . ." "Oh, never mind, let's hurry." "Shall we be warm enough with just these thin wraps, do you think? Babe, will you be warm enough? Sure?"

Powder flew and little pocket combs marched through bright marcel. Flushed cheeks were painted pinker still.

"My pearls," said Babe, "are *old*. And my dress and my slippers are *new*. Now let's see—what can I *borrow*?"

A lace handkerchief, a diamond bar-pin, a pair of earrings were proffered. She chose the bar-pin, and its owner unpinned it proudly, gladly.

"I've got blue garters!" exclaimed another girl.

"Give me one, then," directed Babe. "I'll trade with you. . . . There! That fixes that."

More babbling, "Hurry! Hurry up!" . . . "Listen, are you *sure* we'll be warm enough? Because we can stop at my house, there's nobody home." "Give me that puff, Babe, I'll powder your back." "And just to think a week ago you'd never even met each other!" "Oh, hurry *up*, let's get *started*!" "I'm ready." "So'm I." "Ready, Babe? You look adorable." "Come on, everybody."

They were gone again, and the dressing room seemed twice as still and vacant as before.

A minute of grace, during which Mrs. Brady wiped the spilled powder away with a damp gray rag. Then the door jumped open again. Two evening gowns appeared and made for the dressing table in a bee line. Slim tubular gowns they were, one silver, one palest yellow. Yellow hair went with the silver gown, brown hair with the yellow. The silver-gowned, yellow-haired girl wore orchids on her shoulder, three of them, and a flashing bracelet on each fragile wrist. The other girl looked less prosperous; still, you would rather have looked at her.

Both ignored Mrs. Brady's cosmetic display as utterly as they ignored Mrs. Brady, producing full filled equipment of their own.

"Well," said the girl with the orchids, rouging energetically, "how do you like him?"

"Oh-h—all right."

"Meaning, 'Not any,' hmm? I suspected as much!" The girl with the orchids turned in her chair and scanned her companion's profile with disapproval. "See here, Marilee," she drawled, "are you going to be a damn fool *all* your life?"

"He's fat," said Marilee dreamily. "Fat, and—greasy, sort of. I mean, greasy in his mind. Don't you know what I mean?"

"I know one thing," declared the girl with orchids. "I know Who He Is! And if I were you, that's all I'd need to know. *Under the circumstances.*"

The last three words, stressed meaningly, affected the girl called Marilee curiously. She grew grave. Her lips and lashes drooped. For some seconds she sat frowning a little, breaking a black-sheathed lipstick in two and fitting it together again.

"She's worse," she said finally, low.

"Worse?"

Marilee nodded.

"Well," said the girl with orchids, "there you are. It's the climate. She'll never be anything *but* worse, if she doesn't get away. Out West, or somewhere."

"I know," murmured Marilee.

The other girl opened a tin of eye shadow. "Of course," she said dryly, "suit yourself. She's not *my* sister."

Marilee said nothing. Quiet she sat, breaking the lipstick, mending it, breaking it.

"Oh, well," she breathed finally, wearily, and straightened up. She propped her elbows on the plate-glass dressing-table top and leaned toward the mirror, and with the lipstick she began to make her coral-pink mouth very red and gay and reckless and alluring.

Nightly at one o'clock Vane and Moreno dance for the *Club Français*. They dance a tango, they dance a waltz; then, by way of encore, they do a Black Bottom, and a trick of their own called the Wheel. They dance for twenty, thirty minutes. And while they dance you do not leave your table—for this is what you came to see. Vane and Moreno. The new New York thrill. The sole justification for the five-dollar couvert extorted by Billy Costello.

From one until half past, then, was Mrs. Brady's recess. She had been looking forward to it all the evening long. When it began—when the opening chords of the tango music sounded stirringly from the room outside—Mrs. Brady brightened. With a right good will she sped the parting guests.

Alone, she unlocked her cupboard and took out her magazine—the magazine she had bought three hours before. Heaving a great breath of relief and satisfaction, she plumped herself on the couch and fingered the pages. Immediately she was absorbed, her eyes drinking up printed lines, her lips moving soundlessly.

The magazine was Mrs. Brady's favorite. Its stories were true stories, taken from life (so the Editor said); and to Mrs. Brady they were live, vivid threads in the dull, drab pattern of her night.

PLAYS

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THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST

by Oscar Wilde

CHARACTERS

| | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| JOHN WORTHING, J. P. | LANE (Manservant) |
| ALGERNON MONCRIEFF | LADY BRACKNELL |
| REV. CANON CHASUBLE, D.D. | HON. GWENDOLEN FAIRFAX |
| MERRIMAN (Butler) | CECILY CARDEW |
| MISS PRISM (Governess) | |

SCENES

Act One

Algernon Moncrieff's Flat in Half Moon Street, W.

Act Two

The Garden at the Manor House, Woolton.

Act Three

Drawing-room of the Manor House, Woolton.

Time—1895
Place—London

ACT ONE

SCENE: *Morning-room in ALGERNON's flat in Half Moon Street. The room is luxuriously and artistically furnished. The sound of a piano is heard in the adjoining room.*

[*LANE is arranging afternoon tea on the table, and after the music has ceased, ALGERNON enters.*]

ALGERNON. Did you hear what I was playing, Lane?

LANE. I didn't think it polite to listen, sir.

ALGERNON. I'm sorry for that, for your sake. I don't play accurately—anyone can play accurately—but I play with wonderful expression. As far as the piano is concerned, sentiment is my forte. I keep science for Life.

LANE. Yes, sir.

ALGERNON. And, speaking of the science of Life, have you got the cucumber sandwiches cut for Lady Bracknell?

LANE. Yes, sir. [*Hands them on a salver*]

ALGERNON [*Inspects them, takes two, and sits down on the sofa*]. Oh! . . . by the way, Lane, I see from your book that on Thursday night, when Lord Shoreman and Mr. Worthing were dining with me, eight bottles of champagne are entered as having been consumed.

LANE. Yes, sir; eight bottles and a pint.

ALGERNON. Why is it that at a bachelor's establishment the servants invariably drink the champagne? I ask merely for information.

LANE. I attribute it to the superior quality of the wine, sir. I have often observed that in married households the champagne is rarely of a first-rate brand.

ALGERNON. Good heavens! Is marriage so demoralising as that?

LANE. I believe it *is* a very pleasant state, sir. I have had very little experience of it myself up to the present. I have only been married once. That was in consequence of a misunderstanding between myself and a young person.

ALGERNON [*Languidly*]. I don't know that I am much interested in your family life, Lane.

LANE. No, sir; it is not a very interesting subject. I never think of it myself.

ALGERNON. Very natural, I am sure. That will do, Lane, thank you.

LANE. Thank you, sir. [*LANE goes out*]

ALGERNON. Lane's views on marriage seem somewhat lax. Really, if the lower orders don't set us a good example, what on earth is the use of them? They seem, as a class, to have absolutely no sense of moral responsibility.

[*Enter LANE*]

LANE. Mr. Ernest Worthing.

[*Enter JACK. LANE goes out*]

ALGERNON. How are you, my dear Ernest? What brings you up to town?

JACK. Oh, pleasure, pleasure! What else should bring one anywhere? Eating as usual, I see, Algy!

ALGERNON [*Stiffly*]. I believe it is customary in good society to take some slight refreshment at five o'clock. Where have you been since last Thursday?

JACK [*Sitting down on the sofa*]. In the country.

ALGERNON. What on earth do you do there?

JACK [*Pulling off his gloves*]. When one is in town one amuses oneself. When one is in the country one amuses other people. It is excessively boring.

ALGERNON. And who are the people you amuse?

JACK [*Airily*]. Oh, neighbours, neighbours.

ALGERNON. Got nice neighbours in your part of Shropshire?

JACK. Perfectly horrid! Never speak to one of them.

ALGERNON. How immensely you must amuse them! [*Goes over and takes sandwich*] By the way, Shropshire is your county, is it not?

JACK. Eh? Shropshire? Yes, of course. Hallo! Why all these cups?

Why cucumber sandwiches? Why such reckless extravagance in one so young? Who is coming to tea?

ALGERNON. Oh! merely Aunt Augusta and Gwendolen.

JACK. How perfectly delightful!

ALGERNON. Yes, that is all very well; but I am afraid Aunt Augusta won't quite approve of your being here.

JACK. May I ask why?

ALGERNON. My dear fellow, the way you flirt with Gwendolen is perfectly disgraceful. It is almost as bad as the way Gwendolen flirts with you.

JACK. I am in love with Gwendolen. I have come up to town expressly to propose to her.

ALGERNON. I thought you had come up for pleasure? . . . I call that business.

JACK. How utterly unromantic you are!

ALGERNON. I really don't see anything romantic in proposing. It is very romantic to be in love. But there is nothing romantic about a definite proposal. Why, one may be accepted. One usually is, I believe. Then the excitement is all over. The very essence of romance is uncertainty. If ever I get married, I'll certainly try to forget the fact.

JACK. I have no doubt about that, dear Algy. The Divorce Court was specially invented for people whose memories are so curiously constituted.

ALGERNON. Oh! there is no use speculating on that subject. Divorces are made in Heaven— [JACK puts out his hand to take a sandwich. ALGERNON at once interferes] Please don't touch the cucumber sandwiches. They are ordered specially for Aunt Augusta. [Takes one and eats it]

JACK. Well, you have been eating them all the time.

ALGERNON. That is quite a different matter. She is my aunt. [Takes plate from below] Have some bread and butter. The bread and butter is for Gwendolen. Gwendolen is devoted to bread and butter.

JACK [Advancing to table and helping himself]. And very good bread and butter it is too.

ALGERNON. Well, my dear fellow, you need not eat as if you were going to eat it all. You behave as if you were married to her already. You are not married to her already, and I don't think you ever will be.

JACK. Why on earth do you say that?

ALGERNON. Well, in the first place girls never marry the men they flirt with. Girls don't think it right.

JACK. Oh, that is nonsense!

ALGERNON. It isn't. It is a great truth. It accounts for the extraordinary number of bachelors that one sees all over the place. In the second place, I don't give my consent.

JACK. Your consent!

ALGERNON. My dear fellow, Gwendolen is my first cousin. And before I allow you to marry her, you will have to clear up the whole question of Cecily. [Rings bell]

JACK. Cecily! What on earth do you mean? What do you mean, Algy, by Cecily? I don't know anyone of the name of Cecily.

[Enter LANE]

ALGERNON. Bring me that cigarette case Mr. Worthing left in the smoking-room the last time he dined here.

LANE. Yes, sir. [LANE goes out]

JACK. Do you mean to say you have had my cigarette case all this time? I wish to goodness you had let me know. I have been writing frantic letters to Scotland Yard about it. I was very nearly offering a large reward.

ALGERNON. Well, I wish you would offer one. I happen to be more than usually hard up.

JACK. There is no good offering a large reward now that the thing is found.

[Enter LANE with the cigarette case on a salver. ALGERNON takes it at once. LANE goes out]

ALGERNON. I think that is rather mean of you, Ernest, I must say. [Opens case and examines it] However, it makes no matter, for, now that I look at the inscription inside, I find that the thing isn't yours after all.

JACK. Of course it's mine. [Moving to him] You have seen me with it a hundred times, and you have no right whatsoever to read what is written inside. It is a very ungentlemanly thing to read a private cigarette case.

ALGERNON. Oh! it is absurd to have a hard-and-fast rule about what one should read and what one shouldn't. More than half of modern culture depends on what one shouldn't read.

JACK. I am quite aware of the fact, and I don't propose to discuss modern culture. It isn't the sort of thing one should talk of in private. I simply want my cigarette case back.

ALGERNON. Yes; but this isn't your cigarette case. This cigarette case is a present from someone of the name of Cecily, and you said you didn't know anyone of that name.

JACK. Well, if you want to know, Cecily happens to be my aunt.

ALGERNON. Your aunt!

JACK. Yes. Charming old lady she is, too. Lives at Tunbridge Wells. Just give it back to me, Algy.

ALGERNON [Retreating to back of sofa]. But why does she call herself little Cecily if she is your aunt and lives at Tunbridge Wells? [Reading] 'From little Cecily with her fondest love.'

JACK [Moving to sofa and kneeling upon it]. My dear fellow, what on earth is there in that? Some aunts are tall, some aunts are not tall. That is a matter that surely an aunt may be allowed to decide for herself. You seem to think that every aunt should be exactly like your aunt! That is absurd! For Heaven's sake give me back my cigarette case. [Follows ALGERNON round the room]

ALGERNON. Yes, But why does your aunt call you her uncle. 'From little Cecily, with her fondest love to her dear Uncle Jack.' There is no objection, I admit, to an aunt being a small aunt, but why an aunt, no matter what her

size may be, should call her own nephew her uncle, I can't quite make out. Besides, your name isn't Jack at all; it is Ernest.

JACK. It isn't Ernest; it's Jack.

ALGERNON. You have always told me it was Ernest. I have introduced you to everyone as Ernest. You answer to the name of Ernest. You look as if your name was Ernest. You are the most earnest looking person I ever saw in my life. It is perfectly absurd your saying that your name isn't Ernest. It's on your cards. Here is one of them. [*Taking it from case*] 'Mr. Ernest Worthing, B 4, The Albany.' I'll keep this as a proof that your name is Ernest if ever you attempt to deny it to me, or to Gwendolen, or to anyone else. [*Puts the card in his pocket*]

JACK. Well, my name is Ernest in town and Jack in the country, and the cigarette case was given to me in the country.

ALGERNON. Yes, but that does not account for the fact that your small aunt Cecily, who lives at Tunbridge Wells, calls you her dear uncle. Come, old boy, you had much better have the thing out at once.

JACK. My dear Algy, you talk exactly as if you were a dentist. It is very vulgar to talk like a dentist when one isn't a dentist. It produces a false impression.

ALGERNON. Well, that is exactly what dentists always do. Now, go on! Tell me the whole thing. I may mention that I have always suspected you of being a confirmed and secret Bunburyist; and I am quite sure of it now.

JACK. Bunburyist? What on earth do you mean by a Bunburyist?

ALGERNON. I'll reveal to you the meaning of that incomparable expression as soon as you are kind enough to inform me why you are Ernest in town and Jack in the country.

JACK. Well, produce my cigarette case first.

ALGERNON. Here it is. [*Hands cigarette case*] Now produce your explanation, and pray make it improbable. [*Sits on sofa*]

JACK. My dear fellow, there is nothing improbable about my explanation at all. In fact it's perfectly ordinary. Old Mr. Thomas Cardew, who adopted me when I was a little boy, made me in his will guardian to his granddaughter, Miss Cecily Cardew. Cecily, who addresses me as her uncle from motives of respect that you could not possibly appreciate, lives at my place in the country under the charge of her admirable governess, Miss Prism.

ALGERNON. Where is that place in the country, by the way?

JACK. That is nothing to you, dear boy. You are not going to be invited. . . . I may tell you candidly that the place is not in Shropshire.

ALGERNON. I suspected that, my dear fellow! I have Bunburied all over Shropshire on two separate occasions. Now, go on. Why are you Ernest in town and Jack in the country?

JACK. My dear Algy, I don't know whether you will be able to understand my real motives. You are hardly serious enough. When one is placed in the position of guardian, one has to adopt a very high moral tone on all subjects. It's one's duty to do so. And as a high moral tone can hardly be

said to conduce very much to either one's health or one's happiness, in order to get up to town I have always pretended to have a younger brother of the name of Ernest, who lives in the Albany, and gets into the most dreadful scrapes. That, my dear Algy, is the whole truth pure and simple.

ALGERNON. The truth is rarely pure and never simple. Modern life would be very tedious if it were either, and modern literature a complete impossibility!

JACK. That wouldn't be at all a bad thing.

ALGERNON. Literary criticism is not your forte, my dear fellow. Don't try it. You should leave that to people who haven't been at a University. They do it so well in the daily papers. What you really are is a Bunburyist. I was quite right in saying you were a Bunburyist. You are one of the most advanced Bunburyists I know.

JACK. What on earth do you mean?

ALGERNON. You have invented a very useful younger brother called Ernest, in order that you may be able to come up to town as often as you like. I have invented an invaluable permanent invalid called Bunbury, in order that I may be able to go down into the country whenever I choose. Bunbury is perfectly invaluable. If it wasn't for Bunbury's extraordinary bad health, for instance, I wouldn't be able to dine with you at Willis's to-night, for I have been really engaged to Aunt Augusta for more than a week.

JACK. I haven't asked you to dine with me anywhere to-night.

ALGERNON. I know. You are absurdly careless about sending out invitations. It is very foolish of you. Nothing annoys people so much as not receiving invitations.

JACK. You had much better dine with your Aunt Augusta.

ALGERNON. I haven't the smallest intention of doing anything of the kind. To begin with, I dined there on Monday, and once a week is quite enough to dine with one's own relations. In the second place, whenever I do dine there I am always treated as a member of the family, and sent down with either no woman at all, or two. In the third place, I know perfectly well whom she will place me next to, to-night. She will place me next Mary Farquhar, who always flirts with her own husband across the dinner-table. That is not very pleasant. Indeed, it is not even decent . . . and that sort of thing is enormously on the increase. The amount of women in London who flirt with their own husbands is perfectly scandalous. It looks so bad. It is simply washing one's clean linen in public. Besides, now that I know you to be a confirmed Bunburyist I naturally want to talk to you about Bunburying. I want to tell you the rules.

JACK. I'm not a Bunburyist at all. If Gwendolen accepts me, I am going to kill my brother, indeed I think I'll kill him in any case. Cecily is a little too much interested in him. It is rather a bore. So I am going to get rid of Ernest. And I strongly advise you to do the same with Mr. . . . with your invalid friend who has the absurd name.

ALGERNON. Nothing will induce me to part with Bunbury, and if you ever get married, which seems to me extremely problematic, you will be very glad

to know Bunbury. A man who marries without knowing Bunbury has a very tedious time of it.

JACK. That is nonsense. If I marry a charming girl like Gwendolen, and she is the only girl I ever saw in my life that I would marry, I certainly won't want to know Bunbury.

ALGERNON. Then your wife will. You don't seem to realise, that in married life three is company and two is none.

JACK [*Sententiously*]. That, my dear young friend, is the theory that the corrupt French drama has been propounding for the last fifty years.

ALGERNON. Yes; and that the happy English home has proved in half the time.

JACK. For Heaven's sake, don't try to be cynical. It's perfectly easy to be cynical.

ALGERNON. My dear fellow, it isn't easy to be anything now-a-days. There's such a lot of beastly competition about. [*The sound of an electric bell is heard*] Ah! that must be Aunt Augusta. Only relatives, or creditors, ever ring in that Wagnerian manner. Now, if I get her out of the way for ten minutes, so that you can have an opportunity for proposing to Gwendolen, may I dine with you to-night at Willis's?

JACK. I suppose so, if you want to.

ALGERNON. Yes, but you must be serious about it. I hate people who are not serious about meals. It is so shallow of them.

[*Enter LANE*]

LANE. Lady Bracknell and Miss Fairfax.

[*ALGERNON goes forward to meet them. Enter LADY BRACKNELL and GWENDOLEN*]

LADY BRACKNELL. Good afternoon, dear Algernon, I hope you are behaving very well.

ALGERNON. I'm feeling very well, Aunt Augusta.

LADY BRACKNELL. That's not quite the same thing. In fact the two things rarely go together. [*Sees JACK and bows to him with icy coldness*]

ALGERNON [*To GWENDOLEN*]. Dear me, you are smart!

GWENDOLEN. I am always smart! Aren't I, Mr. Worthing?

JACK. You're quite perfect, Miss Fairfax.

GWENDOLEN. Oh! I hope I am not that. It would leave no room for developments, and I intend to develop in many directions. [*GWENDOLEN and JACK sit down together in the corner*]

LADY BRACKNELL. I'm sorry if we are a little late, Algernon, but I was obliged to call on dear Lady Harbury. I hadn't been there since her poor husband's death. I never saw a woman so altered; she looks quite twenty years younger. And now I'll have a cup of tea, and one of those nice cucumber sandwiches you promised me.

ALGERNON. Certainly, Aunt Augusta. [*Goes over to tea-table*]

LADY BRACKNELL. Won't you come and sit here, Gwendolen?

GWENDOLEN. Thanks, mamma, I'm quite comfortable where I am.

ALGERNON [*Picking up empty plate in horror*]. Good Heavens! Lane! Why are there no cucumber sandwiches? I ordered them specially.

LANE [*Gravely*]. There were no cucumbers in the market this morning, sir. I went down twice.

ALGERNON. No cucumbers!

LANE. No, sir. Not even for ready money.

ALGERNON. That will do, Lane, thank you.

LANE. Thank you, sir. [*Goes out*]

ALGERNON. I am greatly distressed, Aunt Augusta, about there being no cucumbers, not even for ready money.

LADY BRACKNELL. It really makes no matter, Algernon. I had some crumpets with Lady Harbury, who seems to me to be living entirely for pleasure now.

ALGERNON. I hear her hair has turned quite gold from grief.

LADY BRACKNELL. It certainly has changed its colour. From what cause I, of course, cannot say. [ALGERNON *crosses and hands tea*] Thank you. I've quite a treat for you to-night, Algernon. I am going to send you down with Mary Farquhar. She is such a nice woman, and so attentive to her husband. It's delightful to watch them.

ALGERNON. I am afraid, Aunt Augusta, I shall have to give up the pleasure of dining with you to-night after all.

LADY BRACKNELL [*Frowning*]. I hope not, Algernon. It would put my table completely out. Your uncle would have to dine upstairs. Fortunately he is accustomed to that.

ALGERNON. It is a great bore, and, I need hardly say, a terrible disappointment to me, but the fact is I have just had a telegram to say that my poor friend Bunbury is very ill again. [*Exchanges glances with JACK*] They seem to think I should be with him.

LADY BRACKNELL. It is very strange. This Mr. Bunbury seems to suffer from curiously bad health.

ALGERNON. Yes; poor Bunbury is a dreadful invalid.

LADY BRACKNELL. Well, I must say, Algernon, that I think it is high time that Mr. Bunbury made up his mind whether he was going to live or to die. This shilly-shallying with the question is absurd. Nor do I in any way approve of the modern sympathy with invalids. I consider it morbid. Illness of any kind is hardly a thing to be encouraged in others. Health is the primary duty of life. I am always telling that to your poor uncle, but he never seems to take much notice . . . as far as any improvement in his ailments goes. I should be much obliged if you would ask Mr. Bunbury, from me, to be kind enough not to have a relapse on Saturday, for I rely on you to arrange my music for me. It is my last reception and one wants something that will encourage conversation, particularly at the end of the season when everyone has practically said whatever they had to say, which, in most cases, was probably not much.

ALGERNON. I'll speak to Bunbury, Aunt Augusta, if he is still conscious,

and I think I can promise you he'll be all right by Saturday. Of course the music is a great difficulty. You see, if one plays good music, people don't listen, and if one plays bad music people don't talk. But I'll run over the programme I've drawn out, if you will kindly come into the next room for a moment.

LADY BRACKNELL. Thank you, Algernon. It is very thoughtful of you. [*Rising, and following* ALGERNON] I'm sure the programme will be delightful, after a few expurgations. French songs I cannot possibly allow. People always seem to think that they are improper, and either look shocked, which is vulgar, or laugh, which is worse. But German sounds a thoroughly respectable language, and indeed, I believe is so. Gwendolen, you will accompany me.

GWENDOLEN. Certainly, mamma.

[*LADY BRACKNELL and ALGERNON go into the music-room, GWENDOLEN remains behind*]

JACK. Charming day it has been, Miss Fairfax.

GWENDOLEN. Pray don't talk to me about the weather, Mr. Worthing. Whenever people talk to me about the weather, I always feel quite certain that they mean something else. And that makes me so nervous.

JACK. I do mean something else.

GWENDOLEN. I thought so. In fact, I am never wrong.

JACK. And I would like to be allowed to take advantage of Lady Bracknell's temporary absence . . .

GWENDOLEN. I would certainly advise you to do so. Mamma has a way of coming back suddenly into a room that I have often had to speak to her about.

JACK [*Nervously*]. Miss Fairfax, ever since I met you I have admired you more than any girl . . . I have ever met since . . . I met you.

GWENDOLEN. Yes, I am quite aware of the fact. And I often wish that in public, at any rate, you had been more demonstrative. For me you have always had an irresistible fascination. Even before I met you I was far from indifferent to you. [*JACK looks at her in amazement*] We live, as I hope you know, Mr. Worthing, in an age of ideals. The fact is constantly mentioned in the more expensive monthly magazines, and has reached the provincial pulpits I am told: and my ideal has always been to love some one of the name of Ernest. There is something in that name that inspires absolute confidence. The moment Algernon first mentioned to me that he had a friend called Ernest, I knew I was destined to love you.

JACK. You really love me, Gwendolen?

GWENDOLEN. Passionately!

JACK. Darling! You don't know how happy you've made me.

GWENDOLEN. My own Ernest!

JACK. But you don't really mean to say that you couldn't love me if my name wasn't Ernest?

GWENDOLEN. But your name is Ernest.

JACK. Yes, I know it is. But supposing it was something else? Do you mean to say you couldn't love me then?

GWENDOLEN [*Glibly*]. Ah! that is clearly a metaphysical speculation, and like most metaphysical speculations has very little reference at all to the actual facts of real life, as we know them.

JACK. Personally, darling, to speak quite candidly, I don't much care about the name of Ernest . . . I don't think the name suits me at all.

GWENDOLEN. It suits you perfectly. It is a divine name. It has a music of its own. It produces vibrations.

JACK. Well, really, Gwendolen, I must say that I think there are lots of other much nicer names. I think Jack, for instance, a charming name.

GWENDOLEN. Jack? . . . No, there is very little music in the name Jack, if any at all, indeed. It does not thrill. It produces absolutely no vibrations. . . . I have known several Jacks, and they all, without exception, were more than usually plain. Besides, Jack is a notorious domesticity for John! And I pity any woman who is married to a man called John. She would probably never be allowed to know the entrancing pleasure of a single moment's solitude. The only really safe name is Ernest.

JACK. Gwendolen, I must get christened at once—I mean we must get married at once. There is no time to be lost.

GWENDOLEN. Married, Mr. Worthing?

JACK [*Astounded*]. Well . . . surely. You know that I love you, and you led me to believe, Miss Fairfax, that you were not absolutely indifferent to me.

GWENDOLEN. I adore you. But you haven't proposed to me yet. Nothing has been said at all about marriage. The subject has not even been touched on.

JACK. Well . . . may I propose to you now?

GWENDOLEN. I think it would be an admirable opportunity. And to spare you any possible disappointment, Mr. Worthing, I think it only fair to tell you quite frankly beforehand that I am fully determined to accept you.

JACK. Gwendolen!

GWENDOLEN. Yes, Mr. Worthing, what have you got to say to me?

JACK. You know what I have got to say to you.

GWENDOLEN. Yes, but you don't say it.

JACK. Gwendolen, will you marry me? [*Goes on his knees*]

GWENDOLEN. Of course I will, darling. How long you have been about it! I am afraid you have had very little experience in how to propose.

JACK. My own one, I have never loved anyone in the world but you.

GWENDOLEN. Yes, but men often propose for practice. I know my brother Gerald does. All my girl friends tell me so. What wonderfully blue eyes you have, Ernest! They are quite, quite blue. I hope you will always look at me just like that, especially when there are other people present.

[*Enter* LADY BRACKNELL]

LADY BRACKNELL. Mr. Worthing! Rise sir, from this semi-recumbent posture. It is most indecorous.

GWENDOLEN. Mamma! [*He tries to rise; she restrains him*] I must beg

you to retire. This is no place for you. Besides, Mr. Worthing has not quite finished yet.

LADY BRACKNELL. Finished what, may I ask?

GWENDOLEN. I am engaged to Mr. Worthing, mamma. [*They rise together*]

LADY BRACKNELL. Pardon me, you are not engaged to any one. When you do become engaged to some one, I, or your father, should his health permit him, will inform you of the fact. An engagement should come on a young girl as a surprise, pleasant or unpleasant, as the case may be. It is hardly a matter that she could be allowed to arrange for herself. . . . And now I have a few questions to put to you, Mr. Worthing. While I am making these inquiries, you, Gwendolen, will wait for me below in the carriage.

GWENDOLEN [*Reproachfully*]. Mamma!

LADY BRACKNELL. In the carriage, Gwendolen! [*GWENDOLEN goes to the door. She and JACK blow kisses to each other behind LADY BRACKNELL'S back. LADY BRACKNELL looks vaguely about as if she could not understand what the noise was. Finally turns round*] Gwendolen, the carriage!

GWENDOLEN. Yes, mamma. [*Goes out, looking back at JACK*]

LADY BRACKNELL [*Sitting down*]. You can take a seat, Mr. Worthing.

[*Looks in her pocket for note-book and pencil*]

JACK. Thank you, Lady Bracknell, I prefer standing.

LADY BRACKNELL [*Pencil and note-book in hand*]. I feel bound to tell you that you are not down on my list of eligible young men, although I have the same list as the dear Duchess of Bolton has. We work together, in fact. However, I am quite ready to enter your name, should your answers be what a really affectionate mother requires. Do you smoke?

JACK. Well, yes, I must admit I smoke.

LADY BRACKNELL. I am glad to hear it. A man should always have an occupation of some kind. There are far too many idle men in London as it is. How old are you?

JACK. Twenty-nine.

LADY BRACKNELL. A very good age to be married at. I have always been of opinion that a man who desires to get married should know either everything or nothing. Which do you know?

JACK [*After some hesitation*]. I know nothing, Lady Bracknell.

LADY BRACKNELL. I am pleased to hear it. I do not approve of anything that tampers with natural ignorance. Ignorance is like a delicate exotic fruit; touch it and the bloom is gone. The whole theory of modern education is radically unsound. Fortunately in England, at any rate, education produces no effect whatsoever. If it did, it would prove a serious danger to the upper classes, and probably lead to acts of violence in Grosvenor Square. What is your income?

JACK. Between seven and eight thousand a year.

LADY BRACKNELL [*Makes a note in her book*]. In land, or in investments?

JACK. In investments, chiefly.

LADY BRACKNELL. That is satisfactory. What between the duties expected

of one during one's lifetime, and the duties exacted from one after one's death, land has ceased to be either a profit or a pleasure. It gives one position, and prevents one from keeping it up. That's all that can be said about land.

JACK. I have a country house with some land, of course, attached to it, about fifteen hundred acres, I believe; but I don't depend on that for my real income. In fact, as far as I can make out, the poachers are the only people who make anything out of it.

LADY BRACKNELL. A country house! How many bedrooms? Well, that point can be cleared up afterwards. You have a town house, I hope? A girl with a simple, unspoiled nature, like Gwendolen, could hardly be expected to reside in the country.

JACK. Well, I own a house in Belgrave Square, but it is let by the year to Lady Bloxham. Of course, I can get it back whenever I like, at six months' notice.

LADY BRACKNELL. Lady Bloxham? I don't know her.

JACK. Oh, she goes about very little. She is a lady considerably advanced in years.

LADY BRACKNELL. Ah, now-a-days that is no guarantee of respectability of character. What number in Belgrave Square?

JACK. 149.

LADY BRACKNELL [*Shaking her head*]. The unfashionable side. I thought there was something. However, that could easily be altered.

JACK. Do you mean the fashion, or the side?

LADY BRACKNELL [*Sternly*]. Both, if necessary, I presume. What are your politics?

JACK. Well, I am afraid I really have none. I am a Liberal Unionist.

LADY BRACKNELL. Oh, they count as Tories. They dine with us. Or come in the evening, at any rate. Now to minor matters. Are your parents living?

JACK. I have lost both my parents.

LADY BRACKNELL. Both? . . . That seems like carelessness. Who was your father? He was evidently a man of some wealth. Was he born in what the Radical papers call the purple of commerce, or did he rise from the ranks of the aristocracy?

JACK. I am afraid I really don't know. The fact is, Lady Bracknell, I said I had lost my parents. It would be nearer the truth to say that my parents seem to have lost me . . . I don't actually know who I am by birth. I was . . . well, I was found.

LADY BRACKNELL. Found!

JACK. The late Mr. Thomas Cardew, an old gentleman of a very charitable and kindly disposition, found me, and gave me the name of Worthing, because he happened to have a first-class ticket for Worthing in his pocket at the time. Worthing is a place in Sussex. It is a seaside resort.

LADY BRACKNELL. Where did the charitable gentleman who had a first-class ticket for this seaside resort find you?

JACK [*Gravely*]. In a hand-bag.

LADY BRACKNELL. A hand-bag?

JACK [*Very seriously*]. Yes, Lady Bracknell. I was in a hand-bag—a somewhat large, black leather hand-bag, with handles to it—an ordinary hand-bag in fact.

LADY BRACKNELL. In what locality did this Mr. James, or Thomas, Cardew come across this ordinary hand-bag?

JACK. In the cloak-room at Victoria Station. It was given to him in mistake for his own.

LADY BRACKNELL. The cloak-room at Victoria Station?

JACK. Yes. The Brighton line.

LADY BRACKNELL. The line is immaterial. Mr. Worthing, I confess I feel somewhat bewildered by what you have just told me. To be born, or at any rate bred, in a hand-bag, whether it had handles or not, seems to me to display a contempt for the ordinary decencies of family life that remind one of the worst excesses of the French Revolution. And I presume you know what that unfortunate movement led to? As for the particular locality in which the hand-bag was found, a cloak-room at a railway station might serve to conceal a social indiscretion—has probably, indeed, been used for that purpose before now—but it could hardly be regarded as an assured basis for a recognised position in good society.

JACK. May I ask you then what you would advise me to do? I need hardly say I would do anything in the world to ensure Gwendolen's happiness.

LADY BRACKNELL. I would strongly advise you, Mr. Worthing, to try and acquire some relations as soon as possible, and to make a definite effort to produce at any rate one parent, of either sex, before the season is quite over.

JACK. Well, I don't see how I could possibly manage to do that. I can produce the hand-bag at any moment. It is in my dressing-room at home. I really think that should satisfy you, Lady Bracknell.

LADY BRACKNELL. Me, sir! What has it to do with me? You can hardly imagine that I and Lord Bracknell would dream of allowing our only daughter—a girl brought up with the utmost care—to marry into a cloak-room, and form an alliance with a parcel? Good morning, Mr. Worthing!

[LADY BRACKNELL *sweeps out in majestic indignation*]

JACK. Good morning! [ALGERNON *from the other room, strikes up the Wedding March. JACK looks perfectly furious, and goes to the door*] For goodness' sake don't play that ghastly tune, Algy! How idiotic you are!

[*The music stops and ALGERNON enters cheerily*]

ALGERNON. Didn't it go off all right, old boy? You don't mean to say Gwendolen refused you? I know it is a way she has. She is always refusing people. I think it is most ill-natured of her.

JACK. Oh, Gwendolen is as right as a trivet. As far as she is concerned, we are engaged. Her mother is perfectly unbearable. Never met such a Gorgon . . . I don't really know what a Gorgon is like, but I am quite sure that Lady Bracknell is one. In any case, she is a monster, without being a

myth, which is rather unfair. . . . I beg your pardon, Algy, I suppose I shouldn't talk about your own aunt in that way before you.

ALGERNON. My dear boy, I love hearing my relations abused. It is the only thing that makes me put up with them at all. Relations are simply a tedious pack of people, who haven't got the remotest knowledge of how to live, nor the smallest instinct about when to die.

JACK. Oh, that is nonsense!

ALGERNON. It isn't!

JACK. Well, I won't argue about the matter. You always want to argue about things.

ALGERNON. That is exactly what things were originally made for.

JACK. Upon my word, if I thought that, I'd shoot myself . . . [*A pause*] You don't think there is any chance of Gwendolen becoming like her mother in about a hundred and fifty years, do you Algy?

ALGERNON. All women become like their mothers. That is their tragedy. No man does. That's his.

JACK. Is that clever?

ALGERNON. It is perfectly phrased! and quite as true as any observation in civilised life should be.

JACK. I am sick to death of cleverness. Everybody is clever now-a-days. You can't go anywhere without meeting clever people. The thing has become an absolute public nuisance. I wish to goodness we had a few fools left.

ALGERNON. We have.

JACK. I should extremely like to meet them. What do they talk about?

ALGERNON. The fools? Oh! about the clever people, of course.

JACK. What fools!

ALGERNON. By the way, did you tell Gwendolen the truth about your being Ernest in town, and Jack in the country?

JACK [*In a very patronising manner*]. My dear fellow, the truth isn't quite the sort of thing one tells to a nice, sweet, refined girl. What extraordinary ideas you have about the way to behave to a woman!

ALGERNON. The only way to behave to a woman is to make love to her, if she is pretty, and to some one else if she is plain.

JACK. Oh, that is nonsense.

ALGERNON. What about your brother? What about the profligate Ernest?

JACK. Oh, before the end of the week I shall have got rid of him. I'll say he died in Paris of apoplexy. Lots of people die of apoplexy, quite suddenly, don't they?

ALGERNON. Yes, but it's hereditary, my dear fellow. It's a sort of thing that runs in families. You had much better say a severe chill.

JACK. You are sure a severe chill isn't hereditary, or anything of that kind?

ALGERNON. Of course it isn't!

JACK. Very well, then. My poor brother Ernest is carried off suddenly in Paris, by a severe chill. That gets rid of him.

ALGERNON. But I thought you said that . . . Miss Cardew was a little too

much interested in your poor brother Ernest? Won't she feel his loss a good deal?

JACK. Oh, that is all right. Cecily is not a silly, romantic girl, I am glad to say. She has got a capital appetite, goes long walks, and pays no attention at all to her lessons.

ALGERNON. I would rather like to see Cecily.

JACK. I will take very good care you never do. She is excessively pretty, and she is only just eighteen.

ALGERNON. Have you told Gwendolen yet that you have an excessively pretty ward who is only just eighteen?

JACK. Oh! one doesn't blurt these things out to people. Cecily and Gwendolen are perfectly certain to be extremely great friends. I'll bet you anything you like that half an hour after they have met, they will be calling each other sister.

ALGERNON. Women only do that when they have called each other a lot of other things first. Now, my dear boy, if we want to get a good table at Willis's, we really must go and dress. Do you know it is nearly seven?

JACK [*Irritably*]. Oh! it always is nearly seven.

ALGERNON. Well, I'm hungry.

JACK. I never knew you when you weren't. . . .

ALGERNON. What shall we do after dinner? Go to a theatre?

JACK. Oh no! I loathe listening!

ALGERNON. Well, let us go to the Club?

JACK. Oh, no! I hate talking.

ALGERNON. Well, we might trot round to the Empire at ten?

JACK. Oh, no! I can't bear looking at things. It is so silly.

ALGERNON. Well, what shall we do?

JACK. Nothing!

ALGERNON. It is awfully hard work doing nothing. However, I don't mind hard work where there is no definite object of any kind.

[*Enter LANE*]

LANE. Miss Fairfax.

[*Enter GWENDOLEN. LANE goes out*]

ALGERNON. Gwendolen, upon my word!

GWENDOLEN. Algy, kindly turn your back. I have something very particular to say to Mr. Worthing.

ALGERNON. Really, Gwendolen, I don't think I can allow this at all.

GWENDOLEN. Algy, you always adopt a strictly immoral attitude towards life. You are not quite old enough to do that. [ALGERNON *retires to the fireplace*]

JACK. My own darling!

GWENDOLEN. Ernest, we may never be married. From the expression on mamma's face I fear we never shall. Few parents now-a-days pay any regard to what their children say to them. The old-fashioned respect for the young is fast dying out. Whatever influence I ever had over mamma, I lost at the

age of three. But although she may prevent us from becoming man and wife, and I may marry someone else, and marry often, nothing that she can possibly do can alter my eternal devotion to you.

JACK. Dear Gwendolen!

GWENDOLEN. The story of your romantic origin, as related to me by mamma, with unpleasing comments, has naturally stirred the deeper fibres of my nature. Your Christian name has an irresistible fascination. The simplicity of your character makes you exquisitely incomprehensible to me. Your town address at the Albany, I have. What is your address in the country?

JACK. The Manor House, Woolton, Hertfordshire.

[ALGERNON, *who has been carefully listening, smiles to himself, and writes the address on his shirt-cuff. Then picks up the Railway Guide*]

GWENDOLEN. There is a good postal service, I suppose? It may be necessary to do something desperate. That, of course, will require serious consideration. I will communicate with you daily.

JACK. My own one!

GWENDOLEN. How long do you remain in town?

JACK. Till Monday.

GWENDOLEN. Good! Algy, you may turn round now.

ALGERNON. Thanks, I've turned round already.

GWENDOLEN. You may also ring the bell.

JACK. You will let me see you to your carriage, my own darling?

GWENDOLEN. Certainly.

JACK [*To LANE, who now enters*]. I will see Miss Fairfax out.

LANE. Yes, sir. [JACK and GWENDOLEN go off]

[LANE presents several letters on a salver to ALGERNON. It is to be surmised that they are bills, as ALGERNON after looking at the envelopes, tears them up]

ALGERNON. A glass of sherry, Lane.

LANE. Yes, sir.

ALGERNON. To-morrow, Lane, I'm going Bunburying.

LANE. Yes, sir.

ALGERNON. I shall probably not be back till Monday. You can put up my dress clothes, my smoking jacket, and all the Bunbury suits . . .

LANE. Yes, sir. [*Handing sherry*]

ALGERNON. I hope to-morrow will be a fine day, Lane.

LANE. It never is, sir.

ALGERNON. Lane, you're a perfect pessimist.

LANE. I do my best to give satisfaction, sir.

[Enter JACK. LANE goes off]

JACK. There's a sensible, intellectual girl! the only girl I ever cared for in my life. [ALGERNON is laughing immoderately] What on earth are you so amused at?

ALGERNON. Oh, I'm a little anxious about poor Bunbury, that is all.

JACK. If you don't take care, your friend Bunbury will get you into a serious scrape some day.

ALGERNON. I love scrapes. They are the only things that are never serious.

JACK. Oh, that's nonsense, Algy. You never talk anything but nonsense.

ALGERNON. Nobody ever does.

[JACK looks indignantly at him, and leaves the room, ALGERNON lights a cigarette, reads his shirt-cuff and smiles]

ACT TWO

SCENE—*Garden at the Manor House. A flight of gray stone steps leads up to the house. The garden, an old-fashioned one, full of roses. Time of year, July. Basket chairs, and a table covered with books, are set under a large yew tree.*

[MISS PRISM discovered seated at the table. CECILY is at the back watering flowers]

MISS PRISM [*Calling*]. Cecily, Cecily! Surely such a utilitarian occupation as the watering of flowers is rather Moulton's duty than yours? Especially at a moment when intellectual pleasures await you. Your German grammar is on the table. Pray open it at page fifteen. We will repeat yesterday's lesson.

CECILY [*Coming over very slowly*]. But I don't like German. It isn't at all a becoming language. I know perfectly well that I look quite plain after my German lesson.

MISS PRISM. Child, you know how anxious your guardian is that you should improve yourself in every way. He laid particular stress on your German, as he was leaving for town yesterday. Indeed, he always lays stress on your German when he is leaving for town.

CECILY. Dear Uncle Jack is so very serious! Sometimes he is so serious that I think he cannot be quite well.

MISS PRISM [*Drawing herself up*]. Your guardian enjoys the best of health, and his gravity of demeanour is especially to be commended in one so comparatively young as he is. I know no one who has a higher sense of duty and responsibility.

CECILY. I suppose that is why he often looks a little bored when we three are together.

MISS PRISM. Cecily! I am surprised at you. Mr. Worthing has many troubles in his life. Idle merriment and triviality would be out of place in his conversation. You must remember his constant anxiety about that unfortunate young man, his brother.

CECILY. I wish Uncle Jack would allow that unfortunate young man, his brother, to come down here sometimes. We might have a good influence over him, Miss Prism. I am sure you certainly would. You know German, and geology, and things of that kind influence a man very much. [CECILY begins to write in her diary]

MISS PRISM [*Shaking her head*]. I do not think that even I could produce any effect on a character that according to his own brother's admission is irretrievably weak and vacillating. Indeed I am not sure that I would desire to reclaim him. I am not in favour of this modern mania for turning bad people into good people at a moment's notice. As a man sows, so let him reap. You must put away your diary, Cecily. I really don't see why you should keep a diary at all.

CECILY. I keep a diary in order to enter the wonderful secrets of my life. If I didn't write them down I should probably forget all about them.

MISS PRISM. Memory, my dear Cecily, is the diary that we all carry about with us.

CECILY. Yes, but it usually chronicles the things that have never happened, and couldn't possibly have happened. I believe that Memory is responsible for nearly all the three-volume novels that Mudie sends us.

MISS PRISM. Do not speak slightly of the three-volume novel, Cecily. I wrote one myself in earlier days.

CECILY. Did you really, Miss Prism? How wonderfully clever you are! I hope it did not end happily? I don't like novels that end happily. They depress me so much.

MISS PRISM. The good ended happily, and the bad unhappily. That is what Fiction means.

CECILY. I suppose so. But it seems very unfair. And was your novel ever published?

MISS PRISM. Alas! no. The manuscript unfortunately was abandoned. I use the word in the sense of lost or mislaid. To your work, child, these speculations are profitless.

CECILY [*Smiling*]. But I see dear Dr. Chasuble coming up through the garden.

MISS PRISM [*Rising and advancing*]. Dr. Chasuble! This is indeed a pleasure.

[*Enter* CANON CHASUBLE]

CHASUBLE. And how are we this morning? Miss Prism, you are, I trust, well?

CECILY. Miss Prism has just been complaining of a slight headache. I think it would do her so much good to have a short stroll with you in the Park, Dr. Chasuble.

MISS PRISM. Cecily, I have not mentioned anything about a headache.

CECILY. No, dear Miss Prism, I know that, but I felt instinctively that you had a headache. Indeed I was thinking about that, and not about my German lesson, when the Rector came in.

CHASUBLE. I hope, Cecily, you are not inattentive.

CECILY. Oh, I am afraid I am.

* CHASUBLE. That is strange. Were I fortunate enough to be Miss Prism's pupil, I would hang upon her lips. [MISS PRISM *glares*] I spoke meta-

phorically.—My metaphor was drawn from bees. Ahem! Mr. Worthing, I suppose, has not returned from town yet?

MISS PRISM. We do not expect him till Monday afternoon.

CHASUBLE. Ah yes, he usually likes to spend his Sunday in London. He is not one of those whose sole aim is enjoyment, as, by all accounts, that unfortunate young man, his brother, seems to be. But I must not disturb Egeria and her pupil any longer.

MISS PRISM. Egeria? My name is Lætitia, Doctor.

CHASUBLE [*Bowing*]. A classical allusion merely, drawn from the Pagan authors. I shall see you both no doubt at Evensong?

MISS PRISM. I think, dear Doctor, I will have a stroll with you. I find I have a headache after all, and a walk might do it good.

CHASUBLE. With pleasure, Miss Prism, with pleasure. We might go as far as the schools and back.

MISS PRISM. That would be delightful. Cecily, you will read your Political Economy in my absence. The chapter on the Fall of the Rupee you may omit. It is somewhat too sensational. Even these metallic problems have their melodramatic side. [*Goes down the garden with* DR. CHASUBLE]

CECILY [*Picks up books and throws them back on table*]. Horrid Political Economy! Horrid Geography! Horrid, horrid German!

[*Enter* MERRIMAN *with a card on a salver*]

MERRIMAN. Mr. Ernest Worthing has just driven over from the station. He has brought his luggage with him.

CECILY [*Takes the card and reads it*]. 'Mr. Ernest Worthing, B 4, The Albany, W.' Uncle Jack's brother! Did you tell him Mr. Worthing was in town?

MERRIMAN. Yes, Miss. He seemed very much disappointed. I mentioned that you and Miss Prism were in the garden. He said he was anxious to speak to you privately for a moment.

CECILY. Ask Mr. Ernest Worthing to come here. I suppose you had better talk to the housekeeper about a room for him.

MERRIMAN. Yes, Miss. [*MERRIMAN goes off*]

CECILY. I have never met any really wicked person before. I feel rather frightened. I am so afraid he will look just like everyone else.

[*Enter* ALGERNON, *very gay and débonnaire*]

He does!

ALGERNON [*Raising his hat*]. You are my little cousin Cecily, I'm sure.

CECILY. You are under some strange mistake. I am not little. In fact, I believe I am more than usually tall for my age. [*ALGERNON is rather taken aback*] But I am your cousin, Cecily. You, I see from your card, are Uncle Jack's brother, my cousin Ernest, my wicked cousin Ernest.

ALGERNON. Oh! I am not really wicked at all, cousin Cecily. You mustn't think that I am wicked.

CECILY. If you are not, then you have certainly been deceiving us all in a very inexcusable manner. I hope you have not been leading a double life,

pretending to be wicked and being really good all the time. That would be hypocrisy.

ALGERNON [*Looks at her in amazement*]. Oh! of course I have been rather reckless.

CECILY. I am glad to hear it.

ALGERNON. In fact, now you mention the subject, I have been very bad in my own small way.

CECILY. I don't think you should be so proud of that, though I am sure it must have been very pleasant.

ALGERNON. It is much pleasanter being here with you.

CECILY. I can't understand how you are here at all. Uncle Jack won't be back till Monday afternoon.

ALGERNON. That is a great disappointment. I am obliged to go up by the first train on Monday morning. I have a business appointment that I am anxious . . . to miss.

CECILY. Couldn't you miss it anywhere but in London?

ALGERNON. No: the appointment is in London.

CECILY. Well, I know, of course, how important it is not to keep a business engagement, if one wants to retain any sense of the beauty of life, but still I think you had better wait till Uncle Jack arrives. I know he wants to speak to you about your emigrating.

ALGERNON. About my what?

CECILY. Your emigrating. He has gone up to buy your outfit.

ALGERNON. I certainly wouldn't let Jack buy my outfit. He has no taste in neckties at all.

CECILY. I don't think you will require neckties. Uncle Jack is sending you to Australia.

ALGERNON. Australia! I'd sooner die.

CECILY. Well, he said at dinner on Wednesday night, that you would have to choose between this world, the next world, and Australia.

ALGERNON. Oh, well! The accounts I have received of Australia and the next world, are not particularly encouraging. This world is good enough for me, cousin Cecily.

CECILY. Yes, but are you good enough for it?

ALGERNON. I'm afraid I'm not that. That is why I want you to reform me. You might make that your mission, if you don't mind, cousin Cecily.

CECILY. I'm afraid I've no time, this afternoon.

ALGERNON. Well, would you mind my reforming myself this afternoon?

CECILY. It is rather Quixotic of you. But I think you should try.

ALGERNON. I will. I feel better already.

CECILY. You are looking a little worse.

ALGERNON. That is because I am hungry.

CECILY. How thoughtless of me. I should have remembered that when one is going to lead an entirely new life, one requires regular and wholesome meals. Won't you come in?

ALGERNON. Thank you. Might I have a button-hole first? I never have any appetite unless I have a button-hole first.

CECILY. A Maréchal Niel? [*Picks up scissors*]

ALGERNON. No, I'd sooner have a pink rose.

CECILY. Why? [*Cuts a flower*]

ALGERNON. Because you are like a pink rose, cousin Cecily.

CECILY. I don't think it can be right for you to talk to me like that. Miss Prism never says such things to me.

ALGERNON. Then Miss Prism is a short-sighted old lady. [*CECILY puts the rose in his button-hole*] You are the prettiest girl I ever saw.

CECILY. Miss Prism says that all good looks are a snare.

ALGERNON. They are a snare that every sensible man would like to be caught in.

CECILY. Oh! I don't think I would care to catch a sensible man. I shouldn't know what to talk to him about.

[*They pass into the house. MISS PRISM and DR. CHASUBLE return*]

MISS PRISM. You are too much alone, dear Dr. Chasuble. You should get married. A misanthrope I can understand—a womanthrope, never!

CHASUBLE [*With a scholar's shudder*]. Believe me, I do not deserve so neologistic a phrase. The precept as well as the practice of the Primitive Church was distinctly against matrimony.

MISS PRISM [*Sententiously*]. That is obviously the reason why the Primitive Church has not lasted up to the present day. And you do not seem to realise, dear Doctor, that by persistently remaining single, a man converts himself into a permanent public temptation. Men should be more careful; this very celibacy leads weaker vessels astray.

CHASUBLE. But is a man not equally attractive when married?

MISS PRISM. No married man is ever attractive except to his wife.

CHASUBLE. And often, I've been told, not even to her.

MISS PRISM. That depends on the intellectual sympathies of the woman. Maturity can always be depended on. Ripeness can be trusted. Young women are green. [*DR. CHASUBLE starts*] I spoke horticulturally. My metaphor was drawn from fruits. But where is Cecily?

CHASUBLE. Perhaps she followed us to the schools.

[*Enter JACK slowly from the back of the garden. He is dressed in the deepest mourning, with crepe hat-band and black gloves*]

MISS PRISM. Mr. Worthing!

CHASUBLE. Mr. Worthing?

MISS PRISM. This is indeed a surprise. We did not look for you till Monday afternoon.

JACK [*Shakes MISS PRISM's hand in a tragic manner*]. I have returned sooner than I expected. Dr. Chasuble, I hope you are well?

CHASUBLE. Dear Mr. Worthing, I trust this garb of woe does not betoken some terrible calamity?

JACK. My brother.

MISS PRISM. More shameful debts and extravagance?

CHASUBLE. Still leading his life of pleasure?

JACK [*Shaking his head*]. Dead!

CHASUBLE. Your brother Ernest dead?

JACK. Quite dead.

MISS PRISM. What a lesson for him! I trust he will profit by it.

CHASUBLE. Mr. Worthing, I offer you my sincere condolence. You have at least the consolation of knowing that you were always the most generous and forgiving of brothers.

JACK. Poor Ernest! He had many faults, but it is a sad, sad blow.

CHASUBLE. Very sad, indeed. Were you with him at the end?

JACK. No. He died abroad; in Paris, in fact. I had a telegram last night from the manager of the Grand Hotel.

CHASUBLE. Was the cause of death mentioned?

JACK. A severe chill, it seems.

MISS PRISM. As a man sows, so shall he reap.

CHASUBLE [*Raising his hand*]. Charity, dear Miss Prism, charity! None of us are perfect. I myself am peculiarly susceptible to draughts. Will the interment take place here?

JACK. No. He seemed to have expressed a desire to be buried in Paris.

CHASUBLE. In Paris! [*Shakes his head*]. I fear that hardly points to any very serious state of mind at the last. You would no doubt wish me to make some slight allusion to this tragic domestic affliction next Sunday. [*JACK presses his hand convulsively*] My sermon on the meaning of the manna in the wilderness can be adapted to almost any occasion, joyful, or, as in the present case, distressing. [*All sigh*] I have preached it at harvest celebrations, christenings, confirmations, on days of humiliation and festal days. The last time I delivered it was in the Cathedral, as a charity sermon on behalf of the Society for the Prevention of Discontent among the Upper Orders. The Bishop, who was present, was much struck by some of the analogies I drew.

JACK. Ah! that reminds me, you mentioned christenings I think, Dr. Chasuble? I suppose you know how to christen all right? [*DR. CHASUBLE looks astounded*] I mean, of course, you are continually christening, aren't you?

MISS PRISM. It is, I regret to say, one of the Rector's most constant duties in this parish. I have often spoken to the poorer classes on the subject. But they don't seem to know what thrift is.

CHASUBLE. But is there any particular infant in whom you are interested, Mr. Worthing? Your brother was, I believe, unmarried, was he not?

JACK. Oh, yes.

MISS PRISM [*Bitterly*]. People who live entirely for pleasure usually are.

JACK. But it is not for any child, dear Doctor. I am very fond of children. No! the fact is, I would like to be christened myself, this afternoon, if you have nothing better to do.

CHASUBLE. But surely, Mr. Worthing, you have been christened already?

JACK. I don't remember anything about it.

CHASUBLE. But have you any grave doubts on the subject?

JACK. I certainly intend to have. Of course, I don't know if the thing would bother you in any way, or if you think I am a little too old now.

CHASUBLE. Not at all. The sprinkling, and, indeed, the immersion of adults is a perfectly canonical practice.

JACK. Immersion!

CHASUBLE. You need have no apprehensions. Sprinkling is all that is necessary, or indeed I think advisable. Our weather is so changeable. At what hour would you wish the ceremony performed?

JACK. Oh, I might trot round about five if that would suit you?

CHASUBLE. Perfectly, perfectly! In fact I have two similar ceremonies to perform at that time. A case of twins that occurred recently in one of the outlying cottages on your own estate. Poor Jenkins the carter, a most hard-working man.

JACK. Oh! I don't see much fun in being christened along with other babies. It would be childish. Would half-past five do?

CHASUBLE. Admirably! Admirably! [*Takes out watch*] And now, dear Mr. Worthing, I will not intrude any longer into a house of sorrow. I would merely beg you not to be too much bowed down by grief. What seem to us bitter trials are often blessings in disguise.

MISS PRISM. This seems to me a blessing of an extremely obvious kind.

[*Enter CECILY from the house*]

CECILY. Uncle Jack! Oh, I am pleased to see you back. But what horrid clothes you have got on! Do go and change them.

MISS PRISM. Cecily!

CHASUBLE. My child! my child! [*CECILY goes toward JACK; he kisses her brow in a melancholy manner*]

CECILY. What is the matter, Uncle Jack? Do look happy! You look as if you had toothache, and I have got such a surprise for you. Who do you think is in the dining-room? Your brother!

JACK. Who?

CECILY. Your brother Ernest. He arrived about half an hour ago.

JACK. What nonsense! I haven't got a brother.

CECILY. Oh, don't say that. However badly he may have behaved to you in the past he is still your brother. You couldn't be so heartless as to disown him. I'll tell him to come out. And you will shake hands with him, won't you, Uncle Jack? [*Runs back into the house*]

CHASUBLE. These are very joyful tidings.

MISS PRISM. After we had all been resigned to his loss, his sudden return seems to me peculiarly distressing.

JACK. My brother is in the dining-room? I don't know what it all means. I think it is perfectly absurd.

[*Enter ALGERNON and CECILY hand in hand. They come slowly up to*

JACK]

JACK. Good heavens! [*Motions ALGERNON away*]

ALGERNON. Brother John, I have come down from town to tell you that I am very sorry for all the trouble I have given you, and that I intend to lead a better life in the future. [*JACK glares at him and does not take his hand*]

CECILY. Uncle Jack, you are not going to refuse your own brother's hand?

JACK. Nothing will induce me to take his hand. I think his coming down here disgraceful. He knows perfectly well why.

CECILY. Uncle Jack, do be nice. There is some good in everyone. Ernest has just been telling me about his poor invalid friend Mr. Bunbury, whom he goes to visit so often. And surely there must be much good in one who is kind to an invalid, and leaves the pleasures of London to sit by a bed of pain.

JACK. Oh! he has been talking about Bunbury, has he?

CECILY. Yes, he has told me all about poor Mr. Bunbury, and his terrible state of health.

JACK. Bunbury! Well, I won't have him talk to you about Bunbury or about anything else. It is enough to drive one perfectly frantic.

ALGERNON. Of course I admit that the faults were all on my side. But I must say that I think that brother John's coldness to me is peculiarly painful. I expected a more enthusiastic welcome, especially considering it is the first time I have come here.

CECILY. Uncle Jack, if you don't shake hands with Ernest I will never forgive you.

JACK. Never forgive me?

CECILY. Never, never, never!

JACK. Well, this is the last time I shall ever do it. [*Shakes hands with ALGERNON and glares*]

CHASUBLE. It's pleasant, is it not, to see so perfect a reconciliation? I think we might leave the two brothers together.

MISS PRISM. Cecily, you will come with us.

CECILY. Certainly, Miss Prism. My little task of reconciliation is over.

CHASUBLE. You have done a beautiful action to-day, dear child.

MISS PRISM. We must not be premature in our judgments.

CECILY. I feel very happy. [*They all go off*]

JACK. You young scoundrel, Algy, you must get out of this place as soon as possible. I don't allow any Bunburying here.

[*Enter MERRIMAN*]

MERRIMAN. I have put Mr. Ernest's things in the room next to yours, sir. I suppose that is all right?

JACK. What?

MERRIMAN. Mr. Ernest's luggage, sir. I have unpacked it and put it in the room next to your own.

JACK. His luggage?

MERRIMAN. Yes, sir. Three portmanteaus, a dressing-case, two hat-boxes, and a large luncheon-basket.

ALGERNON. I am afraid I can't stay more than a week this time.

JACK. Merriman, order the dog-cart at once. Mr. Ernest has been suddenly called back to town.

MERRIMAN. Yes, sir. [*Goes back into the house*]

ALGERNON. What a fearful liar you are, Jack. I have not been called back to town at all.

JACK. Yes, you have.

ALGERNON. I haven't heard anyone call me.

JACK. Your duty as a gentleman calls you back.

ALGERNON. My duty as a gentleman has never interfered with my pleasures in the smallest degree.

JACK. I can quite understand that.

ALGERNON. Well, Cecily is a darling.

JACK. You are not to talk of Miss Cardew like that. I don't like it.

ALGERNON. Well, I don't like your clothes. You look perfectly ridiculous in them. Why on earth don't you go up and change? It is perfectly childish to be in deep mourning for a man who is actually staying for a whole week with you in your house as a guest. I call it grotesque.

JACK. You are certainly not staying with me for a whole week as a guest or anything else. You have got to leave . . . by the four-five train.

ALGERNON. I certainly won't leave you so long as you are in mourning. It would be most unfriendly. If I were in mourning you would stay with me, I suppose. I should think it very unkind if you didn't.

JACK. Well, will you go if I change my clothes?

ALGERNON. Yes, if you are not too long. I never saw anybody take so long to dress, and with such little result.

JACK. Well, at any rate, that is better than being always over-dressed as you are.

ALGERNON. If I am occasionally a little over-dressed, I make up for it by being always immensely over-educated.

JACK. Your vanity is ridiculous, your conduct an outrage, and your presence in my garden utterly absurd. However, you have got to catch the four-five, and I hope you will have a pleasant journey back to town. This Bunburying, as you call it, has not been a great success for you.

[*Goes into the house*]

ALGERNON. I think it has been a great success. I'm in love with Cecily, and that is everything.

[*Enter CECILY at the back of the garden. She picks up the can and begins to water the flowers*]

But I must see her before I go, and make arrangements for another Bunbury. Ah, there she is.

CECILY. Oh, I merely came back to water the roses. I thought you were with Uncle Jack.

ALGERNON. He's gone to order the dog-cart for me.

CECILY. Oh, is he going to take you for a nice drive?

ALGERNON. He's going to send me away.

CECILY. Then have we got to part?

ALGERNON. I am afraid so. It's a very painful parting.

CECILY. It is always painful to part from people whom one has known for a very brief space of time. The absence of old friends one can endure with equanimity. But even a momentary separation from anyone to whom one has just been introduced is almost unbearable.

ALGERNON. Thank you.

[*Enter MERRIMAN*]

MERRIMAN. The dog-cart is at the door, sir. [*ALGERNON looks appealingly at CECILY*]

CECILY. It can wait, Merriman . . . for . . . five minutes.

MERRIMAN. Yes, Miss. [*Exit MERRIMAN*]

ALGERNON. I hope, Cecily, I shall not offend you if I state quite frankly and openly that you seem to me to be in every way the visible personification of absolute perfection.

CECILY. I think your frankness does you great credit, Ernest. If you will allow me I will copy your remarks into my diary. [*Goes over to table and begins writing in diary*]

ALGERNON. Do you really keep a diary? I'd give anything to look at it. May I?

CECILY. Oh, no. [*Puts her hand over it*] You see, it is simply a very young girl's record of her own thoughts and impressions, and consequently meant for publication. When it appears in volume form I hope you will order a copy. But pray, Ernest, don't stop. I delight in taking down from dictation. I have reached 'absolute perfection.' You can go on. I am quite ready for more.

ALGERNON [*Somewhat taken aback*]. Ahem! Ahem!

CECILY. Oh, don't cough, Ernest. When one is dictating one should speak fluently and not cough. Besides, I don't know how to spell a cough. [*Writes as ALGERNON speaks*]

ALGERNON [*Speaking very rapidly*]. Cecily, ever since I first looked upon your wonderful and incomparable beauty, I have dared to love you wildly, passionately, devotedly, hopelessly.

CECILY. I don't think that you should tell me that you love me wildly, passionately, devotedly, hopelessly. Hopelessly doesn't seem to make much sense, does it?

ALGERNON. Cecily!

[*Enter MERRIMAN*]

MERRIMAN. The dog-cart is waiting, sir.

ALGERNON. Tell it to come round next week, at the same hour.

MERRIMAN [*Looks at CECILY, who makes no sign*]. Yes, sir. [*MERRIMAN retires*]

CECILY. Uncle Jack would be very much annoyed if he knew you were staying on till next week, at the same hour.

ALGERNON. Oh, I don't care about Jack. I don't care for anybody in the whole world but you. I love you, Cecily. You will marry me, won't you?

CECILY. You silly boy! Of course. Why, we have been engaged for the last three months.

ALGERNON. For the last three months?

CECILY. Yes, it will be exactly three months on Thursday.

ALGERNON. But how did we become engaged?

CECILY. Well, ever since dear Uncle Jack first confessed to us that he had a younger brother who was very wicked and bad, you of course have formed the chief topic of conversation between myself and Miss Prism. And of course a man who is much talked about is always very attractive. One feels there must be something in him after all. I daresay it was foolish of me, but I fell in love with you, Ernest.

ALGERNON. Darling! And when was the engagement actually settled?

CECILY. On the 4th of February last. Worn out by your entire ignorance of my existence, I determined to end the matter one way or the other, and after a long struggle with myself I accepted you under this dear old tree here. The next day I bought this little ring in your name, and this is the little bangle with the true lover's knot I promised you always to wear.

ALGERNON. Did I give you this? It's very pretty, isn't it?

CECILY. Yes, you've wonderfully good taste, Ernest. It's the excuse I've always given for your leading such a bad life. And this is the box in which I keep all your dear letters. [*Kneels at table, opens box, and produces letters tied up with blue ribbon*]

ALGERNON. My letters! But my own sweet Cecily, I have never written you any letters.

CECILY. You need hardly remind me of that, Ernest. I remember only too well that I was forced to write your letters for you. I wrote always three times a week, and sometimes oftener.

ALGERNON. Oh, do let me read them, Cecily?

CECILY. Oh, I couldn't possibly. They would make you far too conceited. [*Replaces box*] The three you wrote me after I had broken off the engagement are so beautiful, and so badly spelled, that even now I can hardly read them without crying a little.

ALGERNON. But was our engagement ever broken off?

CECILY. Of course it was. On the 22nd of last March. You can see the entry if you like. [*Shows diary*] 'To-day I broke off my engagement with Ernest. I feel it is better to do so. The weather still continues charming.'

ALGERNON. But why on earth did you break it off? What had I done? I had done nothing at all. Cecily, I am very much hurt indeed to hear you broke it off. Particularly when the weather was so charming.

CECILY. It would hardly have been a really serious engagement if it hadn't been broken off at least once. But I forgave you before the week was out.

ALGERNON [*Crossing to her, and kneeling*]. What a perfect angel you are, Cecily.

CECILY. You dear romantic boy. [*He kisses her, she puts her fingers through his hair*] I hope your hair curls naturally, does it?

ALGERNON. Yes, darling, with a little help from others.

CECILY. I am so glad.

ALGERNON. You'll never break off our engagement again, Cecily?

CECILY. I don't think I could break it off now that I have actually met you. Besides, of course, there is the question of your name.

ALGERNON. Yes, of course. [*Nervously*]

CECILY. You must not laugh at me, darling, but it had always been a girlish dream of mine to love some one whose name was Ernest. [*ALGERNON rises, CECILY also*] There is something in that name that seems to inspire absolute confidence. I pity any poor married woman whose husband is not called Ernest.

ALGERNON. But, my dear child, do you mean to say you could not love me if I had some other name?

CECILY. But what name?

ALGERNON. Oh, any name you like—Algernon—for instance . . .

CECILY. But I don't like the name of Algernon.

ALGERNON. Well, my own dear, sweet, loving little darling, I really can't see why you should object to the name of Algernon. It is not at all a bad name. In fact, it is rather an aristocratic name. Half of the chaps who get into the Bankruptcy Court are called Algernon. But seriously, Cecily . . . [*Moving to her*] . . . if my name was Algy, couldn't you love me?

CECILY [*Rising*]. I might respect you, Ernest, I might admire your character, but I fear that I should not be able to give you my undivided attention.

ALGERNON. Ahem! Cecily! [*Picking up hat*] Your Rector here is, I suppose, thoroughly experienced in the practice of all the rites and ceremonials of the Church?

CECILY. Oh, yes. Dr. Chasuble is a most learned man. He has never written a single book, so you can imagine how much he knows.

ALGERNON. I must see him at once on a most important christening—I mean on most important business.

CECILY. Oh!

ALGERNON. I shan't be away more than half an hour.

CECILY. Considering that we have been engaged since February the 14th, and that I only met you to-day for the first time, I think it is rather hard that you should leave me for so long a period as half an hour. Couldn't you make it twenty minutes?

ALGERNON. I'll be back in no time.

[*Kisses her and rushes down the garden*]

CECILY. What an impetuous boy he is! I like his hair so much. I must enter his proposal in my diary.

[*Enter MERRIMAN*]

MERRIMAN. A Miss Fairfax has just called to see Mr. Worthing. On very important business Miss Fairfax states.

CECILY. Isn't Mr. Worthing in his library?

MERRIMAN. Mr. Worthing went over in the direction of the Rectory some time ago.

CECILY. Pray ask the lady to come out here; Mr. Worthing is sure to be back soon. And you can bring tea.

MERRIMAN. Yes, Miss. [*Goes out*]

CECILY. Miss Fairfax! I suppose one of the many good elderly women who are associated with Uncle Jack in some of his philanthropic work in London. I don't quite like women who are interested in philanthropic work. I think it is so forward of them.

[*Enter MERRIMAN*]

MERRIMAN. Miss Fairfax.

[*Enter GWENDOLEN. Exit MERRIMAN*]

CECILY [*Advancing to meet her*]. Pray let me introduce myself to you. My name is Cecily Cardew.

GWENDOLEN. Cecily Cardew? [*Moving to her and shaking hands*] What a very sweet name! Something tells me that we are going to be great friends. I like you already more than I can say. My first impressions of people are never wrong.

CECILY. How nice of you to like me so much after we have known each other such a comparatively short time. Pray sit down.

GWENDOLEN [*Still standing up*]. I may call you Cecily, may I not?

CECILY. With pleasure!

GWENDOLEN. And you will always call me Gwendolen, won't you?

CECILY. If you wish.

GWENDOLEN. Then that is all quite settled, is it not?

CECILY. I hope so. [*A pause. They both sit down together*]

GWENDOLEN. Perhaps this might be a favourable opportunity for my mentioning who I am. My father is Lord Bracknell. You have never heard of papa, I suppose?

CECILY. I don't think so.

GWENDOLEN. Outside the family circle, papa, I am glad to say, is entirely unknown. I think that is quite as it should be. The home seems to me to be the proper sphere for the man. And certainly once a man begins to neglect his domestic duties he becomes painfully effeminate, does he not? And I don't like that. It makes men so very attractive. Cecily, mamma, whose views on education are remarkably strict, has brought me up to be extremely short-sighted; it is part of her system; so do you mind my looking at you through my glasses?

CECILY. Oh! not at all, Gwendolen. I am very fond of being looked at.

GWENDOLEN [*After examining CECILY carefully through a lorgnette*]. You are here on a short visit I suppose.

CECILY. Oh no! I live here.

GWENDOLEN [*Severely*]. Really? Your mother, no doubt, or some female relative of advanced years, resides here also?

CECILY. Oh no! I have no mother, nor, in fact, any relations.

GWENDOLEN. Indeed!

CECILY. My dear guardian, with the assistance of Miss Prism, has the arduous task of looking after me.

GWENDOLEN. Your guardian?

CECILY. Yes, I am Mr. Worthing's ward.

GWENDOLEN. Oh! It is strange he never mentioned to me that he had a ward. How secretive of him! He grows more interesting hourly. I am not sure, however, that the news inspires me with feelings of unmixed delight. [*Rising and going to her*] I am very fond of you, Cecily; I have liked you ever since I met you! But I am bound to state that now that I know that you are Mr. Worthing's ward, I cannot help expressing a wish you were—well just a little older than you seem to be—and not quite so very alluring in appearance. In fact, if I may speak candidly—

CECILY. Pray do! I think that whenever one has anything unpleasant to say, one should always be quite candid.

GWENDOLEN. Well, to speak with perfect candour, Cecily, I wish that you were fully forty-two, and more than usually plain for your age. Ernest has a strong upright nature. He is the very soul of truth and honour. Disloyalty would be as impossible to him as deception. But even men of the noblest possible moral character are extremely susceptible to the influence of the physical charms of others. Modern, no less than Ancient History, supplies us with many most painful examples of what I refer to. If it were not so, indeed. History would be quite unreadable.

CECILY. I beg your pardon, Gwendolen, did you say Ernest?

GWENDOLEN. Yes.

CECILY. Oh, but it is not Mr. Ernest Worthing who is my guardian. It is his brother—his elder brother.

GWENDOLEN [*Sitting down again*]. Ernest never mentioned to me that he had a brother.

CECILY. I am sorry to say they have not been on good terms for a long time.

GWENDOLEN. Ah! that accounts for it. And now that I think of it I have never heard any man mention his brother. The subject seems distasteful to most men. Cecily, you have lifted a load from my mind. I was growing almost anxious. It would have been terrible if any cloud had come across a friendship like ours, would it not? Of course you are quite, quite sure that it is not Mr. Ernest Worthing who is your guardian?

CECILY. Quite sure. [*A pause*] In fact, I am going to be his.

GWENDOLEN [*Enquiringly*]. I beg your pardon?

CECILY [*Rather shy and confidingly*]. Dearest Gwendolen, there is no reason why I should make a secret of it to you. Our little county newspaper is sure to chronicle the fact next week. Mr. Ernest Worthing and I are engaged to be married.

GWENDOLEN [*Quite politely, rising*]. My darling Cecily, I think there must

be some slight error. Mr. Ernest Worthing is engaged to me. The announcement will appear in the 'Morning Post' on Saturday at the latest.

CECILY [*Very politely, rising*]. I am afraid you must be under some misconception. Ernest proposed to me exactly ten minutes ago. [*Shows diary*]

GWENDOLEN [*Examines diary through her lorgnette carefully*]. It is certainly very curious, for he asked me to be his wife yesterday afternoon at 5.30. If you would care to verify the incident, pray do so. [*Produces diary of her own*] I never travel without my diary. One should always have something sensational to read in the train. I am so sorry, dear Cecily, if it is any disappointment to you, but I am afraid I have the prior claim.

CECILY. It would distress me more than I can tell you, dear Gwendolen, if it caused you any mental or physical anguish, but I feel bound to point out that since Ernest proposed to you he clearly has changed his mind.

GWENDOLEN [*Meditatively*]. If the poor fellow has been entrapped into any foolish promise I shall consider it my duty to rescue him at once, and with a firm hand.

CECILY [*Thoughtfully and sadly*]. Whatever unfortunate entanglement my dear boy may have got into, I will never reproach him with it after we are married.

GWENDOLEN. Do you allude to me, Miss Cardew, as an entanglement? You are presumptuous. On an occasion of this kind it becomes more than a moral duty to speak one's mind. It becomes a pleasure.

CECILY. Do you suggest, Miss Fairfax, that I entrapped Ernest into an engagement? How dare you? This is no time for wearing the shallow mask of manners. When I see a spade I call it a spade.

GWENDOLEN [*Satirically*]. I am glad to say that I have never seen a spade. It is obvious that our social spheres have been widely different.

[*Enter MERRIMAN, followed by the footman. He carries a salver, table cloth, and plate stand. Cecily is about to retort. The presence of the servants exercises a restraining influence, under which both girls chafe*]

MERRIMAN. Shall I lay tea here as usual, Miss?

CECILY [*Sternly, in a calm voice*]. Yes, as usual. [*MERRIMAN begins to clear and lay cloth. A long pause. CECILY and GWENDOLEN glare at each other*]

GWENDOLEN. Are there many interesting walks in the vicinity, Miss Cardew?

CECILY. Oh! yes! a great many. From the top of one of the hills quite close one can see five counties.

GWENDOLEN. Five counties! I don't think I should like that. I hate crowds.

CECILY [*Sweetly*]. I suppose that is why you live in town? [*GWENDOLEN bites her lip, and beats her foot nervously with her parasol*]

GWENDOLEN [*Looking around*]. Quite a well-kept garden this is, Miss Cardew.

CECILY. So glad you like it, Miss Fairfax.

GWENDOLEN. I had no idea there were any flowers in the country.

CECILY. Oh, flowers are as common here, Miss Fairfax, as people are in London.

GWENDOLEN. Personally I cannot understand how anybody manages to exist in the country, if anybody who is anybody does. The country always bores me to death.

CECILY. Ah! This is what the newspapers call agricultural depression, is it not? I believe the aristocracy are suffering very much from it just at present. It is almost an epidemic amongst them, I have been told. May I offer you some tea, Miss Fairfax?

GWENDOLEN [*With elaborate politeness*]. Thank you. [*Aside*] De-testable girl! But I require tea!

CECILY [*Sweetly*]. Sugar?

GWENDOLEN [*Superciliously*]. No, thank you. Sugar is not fashionable any more. [CECILY looks angrily at her, takes up the tongs and puts four lumps of sugar into the cup]

CECILY [*Severely*]. Cake or bread and butter?

GWENDOLEN [*In a bored manner*]. Bread and butter please. Cake is rarely seen at the best houses now-a-days.

CECILY [*Cuts a very large slice of cake, and puts it on the tray*]. Hand that to Miss Fairfax.

[MERRIMAN does so, and goes out with footman. GWENDOLEN drinks the tea and makes a grimace. Puts down cup at once, reaches out her hand to the bread and butter, looks at it, and finds it is cake. Rises in indignation]

GWENDOLEN. You have filled my tea with lumps of sugar, and though I asked most distinctly for bread and butter, you have given me cake. I am known for the gentleness of my disposition, and the extraordinary sweetness of my nature, but I warn you, Miss Cardew, you may go too far.

CECILY [*Rising*]. To save my poor, innocent, trusting boy from the machinations of any other girl there are no lengths to which I would not go.

GWENDOLEN. From the moment I saw you I distrusted you. I felt that you were false and deceitful. I am never deceived in such matters. My first impressions of people are invariably right.

CECILY. It seems to me, Miss Fairfax, that I am trespassing on your valuable time. No doubt you have many other calls of a similar character to make in the neighborhood.

[*Enter JACK*]

GWENDOLEN [*Catching sight of him*]. Ernest! My own Ernest!

JACK. Gwendolen! Darling! [*Offers to kiss her*]

GWENDOLEN [*Drawing back*]. A moment! May I ask if you are engaged to be married to this young lady? [*Points to CECILY*]

JACK [*Laughing*]. To dear little Cecily! Of course not! What could have put such an idea into your pretty little head?

GWENDOLEN. Thank you. You may. [*Offers her cheek*]

CECILY [*Very sweetly*]. I knew there must be some misunderstanding, Miss

Fairfax. The gentleman whose arm is at present around your waist is my dear guardian, Mr. John Worthing.

GWENDOLEN. I beg your pardon?

CECILY. This is Uncle Jack.

GWENDOLEN [*Receding*]. Jack! Oh!

[*Enter ALGERNON*]

CECILY. Here is Ernest.

ALGERNON [*Goes straight over to CECILY without noticing anyone else*]. My own love! [*Offers to kiss her*]

CECILY [*Drawing back*]. A moment, Ernest! May I ask you—are you engaged to be married to this young lady?

ALGERNON [*Looking around*]. To what young lady? Good heavens! Gwendolen!

CECILY. Yes! to good heavens, Gwendolen, I mean to Gwendolen.

ALGERNON [*Laughing*]. Of course not! What could have put such an idea into your pretty little head?

CECILY. Thank you. [*Presenting her cheek to be kissed*] You may. [*ALGERNON kisses her*]

GWENDOLEN. I felt there was some slight error, Miss Cardew. The gentleman who is now embracing you is my cousin, Mr. Algernon Moncrieff.

CECILY [*Breaking away from ALGERNON*]. Algernon Moncrieff! Oh! [*The two girls move towards each other and put their arms round each other's waist as if for protection*]

CECILY. Are you called Algernon?

ALGERNON. I cannot deny it.

CECILY. Oh!

GWENDOLEN. Is your name really John?

JACK [*Standing rather proudly*]. I could deny it if I liked. I could deny anything if I liked. But my name certainly is John. It has been John for years.

CECILY [*To GWENDOLEN*]. A gross deception has been practised on both of us.

GWENDOLEN. My poor wounded Cecily!

CECILY. My sweet wronged Gwendolen!

GWENDOLEN [*Slowly and seriously*]. You will call me sister, will you not? [*They embrace. JACK and ALGERNON groan and walk up and down*]

CECILY [*Rather brightly*]. There is just one question I would like to be allowed to ask my guardian.

GWENDOLEN. An admirable idea! Mr. Worthing, there is just one question I would like to be permitted to put to you. Where is your brother Ernest? We are both engaged to be married to your brother Ernest, so it is a matter of some importance to us to know where your brother Ernest is at present.

JACK [*Slowly and hesitatingly*]. Gwendolen—Cecily—it is very painful for me to be forced to speak the truth. It is the first time in my life that I have ever been reduced to such a painful position, and I am really quite inexperi-

enced in doing anything of the kind. However, I will tell you quite frankly that I have no brother Ernest. I have no brother at all. I never had a brother in my life, and I certainly have not the smallest intention of ever having one in the future.

CECILY [*Surprised*]. No brother at all?

JACK [*Cheerily*]. None!

GWENDOLEN [*Severely*]. Had you never a brother of any kind?

JACK [*Pleasantly*]. Never. Not even of any kind.

GWENDOLEN. I am afraid it is quite clear, Cecily, that neither of us is engaged to be married to anyone.

CECILY. It is not a very pleasant position for a young girl suddenly to find herself in. Is it?

GWENDOLEN. Let us go into the house. They will hardly venture to come after us there.

CECILY. No, men are so cowardly, aren't they?

[*They retire into the house with scornful looks*]

JACK. This ghastly state of things is what you call Bunburying, I suppose?

ALGERNON. Yes, and a perfectly wonderful Bunbury it is. The most wonderful Bunbury I have ever had in my life.

JACK. Well, you've no right whatsoever to Bunbury here.

ALGERNON. That is absurd. One has a right to Bunbury anywhere one chooses. Every serious Bunburyist knows that.

JACK. Serious Bunburyist! Good heavens!

ALGERNON. Well, one must be serious about something, if one wants to have any amusement in life. I happen to be serious about Bunburying. What on earth you are serious about I haven't got the remotest idea. About everything, I should fancy. You have such an absolutely trivial nature.

JACK. Well, the only small satisfaction I have in the whole of this wretched business is that your friend Bunbury is quite exploded. You won't be able to run down to the country quite so often as you used to do, dear Algy. And a very good thing too.

ALGERNON. Your brother is a little off colour, isn't he, dear Jack? You won't be able to disappear to London quite so frequently as your wicked custom was. And not a bad thing either.

JACK. As for your conduct towards Miss Cardew, I must say that your taking in a sweet, simple, innocent girl like that is quite inexcusable. To say nothing of the fact that she is my ward.

ALGERNON. I can see no possible defence at all for your deceiving a brilliant, clever, thoroughly experienced young lady like Miss Fairfax. To say nothing of the fact that she is my cousin.

JACK. I wanted to be engaged to Gwendolen, that is all. I love her.

ALGERNON. Well, I simply wanted to be engaged to Cecily. I adore her.

JACK. There is certainly no chance of your marrying Miss Cardew.

ALGERNON. I don't think there is much likelihood, Jack, of you and Miss Fairfax being united.

JACK. Well, that is no business of yours.

ALGERNON. If it was my business, I wouldn't talk about it. [*Begins to eat muffins*] It is very vulgar to talk about one's business. Only people like stock-brokers do that, and then merely at dinner parties.

JACK. How can you sit there, calmly eating muffins when we are in this horrible trouble, I can't make out. You seem to be perfectly heartless.

ALGERNON. Well, I can't eat muffins in an agitated manner. The butter would probably get on my cuffs. One should always eat muffins quite calmly. It is the only way to eat them.

JACK. I say it's perfectly heartless your eating muffins at all, under the circumstances.

ALGERNON. When I am in trouble, eating is the only thing that consoles me. Indeed, when I am in really great trouble, as anyone who knows me intimately will tell you, I refuse everything except food and drink. At the present moment I am eating muffins because I am unhappy. Besides, I am particularly fond of muffins. [*Rising*]

JACK [*Rising*]. Well, that is no reason why you should eat them all in that greedy way. [*Takes muffins from ALGERNON*]

ALGERNON [*Offering tea-cake*]. I wish you would have tea-cake instead. I don't like tea-cake.

JACK. Good heavens! I suppose a man may eat his own muffins in his own garden.

ALGERNON. But you have just said it was perfectly heartless to eat muffins.

JACK. I said it was perfectly heartless of you, under the circumstances. That is a very different thing.

ALGERNON. That may be. But the muffins are the same. [*He seizes the muffin-dish from JACK*]

JACK. Algy, I wish to goodness you would go.

ALGERNON. You can't possibly ask me to go without having some dinner. It's absurd. I never go without my dinner. No one ever does, except vegetarians and people like that. Besides I have just made arrangements with Dr. Chasuble to be christened at a quarter to six under the name of Ernest.

JACK. My dear fellow, the sooner you give up that nonsense the better. I made arrangements this morning with Dr. Chasuble to be christened myself at 5.30, and I naturally will take the name of Ernest. Gwendolen would wish it. We can't both be christened Ernest. It's absurd. Besides, I have a perfect right to be christened if I like. There is no evidence at all that I ever have been christened by anybody. I should think it extremely probable I never was, and so does Dr. Chasuble. It is entirely different in your case. You have been christened already.

ALGERNON. Yes, but I have not been christened for years.

JACK. Yes, but you have been christened. That is the important thing.

ALGERNON. Quite so. So I know my constitution can stand it. If you are not quite sure about your ever having been christened, I must say I think it rather dangerous your venturing on it now. It might make you very unwell.

You can hardly have forgotten that someone very closely connected with you was very nearly carried off this week in Paris by a severe chill.

JACK. Yes, but you said yourself that a severe chill was not hereditary.

ALGERNON. It usen't to be, I know—but I daresay it is now. Science is always making wonderful improvements in things.

JACK [*Picking up the muffin-dish*]. Oh, that is nonsense; you are always talking nonsense.

ALGERNON. Jack, you are at the muffins again! I wish you wouldn't! There are only two left. [*Takes them*] I told you I was particularly fond of muffins.

JACK. But I hate tea-cake.

ALGERNON. Why on earth then do you allow tea-cake to be served up for your guests? What ideas you have of hospitality!

JACK. Algernon! I have already told you to go. I don't want you here. Why don't you go?

ALGERNON. I haven't quite finished my tea yet! and there is still one muffin left. [*JACK groans and sinks into a chair. ALGERNON still continues eating*]

ACT THREE

SCENE: *Morning-room at the Manor House.*

[*GWENDOLEN and CECILY are at the window, looking out into the garden*]

GWENDOLEN. The fact that they did not follow us at once into the house, as anyone else would have done, seems to me to show that they have some sense of shame left.

CECILY. They have been eating muffins. That looks like repentance.

GWENDOLEN [*After a pause*]. They don't seem to notice us at all. Couldn't you cough?

CECILY. But I haven't a cough.

GWENDOLEN. They're looking at us. What effrontery!

CECILY. They're approaching. That's very forward of them.

GWENDOLEN. Let us preserve a dignified silence.

CECILY. Certainly. It's the only thing to do now.

[*Enter JACK followed by ALGERNON. They whistle some dreadful popular air from a British opera*]

GWENDOLEN. This dignified silence seems to produce an unpleasant effect.

CECILY. A most distasteful one.

GWENDOLEN. But we will not be the first to speak.

CECILY. Certainly not.

GWENDOLEN. Mr. Worthing, I have something very particular to ask you. Much depends on your reply.

CECILY. Gwendolen, your common sense is invaluable. Mr. Moncrieff, kindly answer me the following question: Why did you pretend to be my guardian's brother?

ALGERNON. In order that I might have an opportunity of meeting you.

CECILY [*To GWENDOLEN*]. That certainly seems a satisfactory explanation, does it not?

GWENDOLEN. Yes, dear, if you can believe him.

CECILY. I don't. But that does not affect the wonderful beauty of his answer.

GWENDOLEN. True. In matters of grave importance, style, not sincerity is the vital thing. Mr. Worthing, what explanation can you offer to me for pretending to have a brother? Was it in order that you might have an opportunity of coming up to town to see me as often as possible?

JACK. Can you doubt it, Miss Fairfax?

GWENDOLEN. I have the gravest doubts upon the subject. But I intend to crush them. This is not the moment for German scepticism. [*Moving to CECILY*] Their explanations appear to be quite satisfactory, especially Mr. Worthing's. That seems to me to have the stamp of truth upon it.

CECILY. I am more than content with what Mr. Moncrieff said. His voice alone inspires one with absolute credulity.

GWENDOLEN. Then you think we should forgive them?

CECILY. Yes. I mean no.

GWENDOLEN. True! I had forgotten. There are principles at stake that one cannot surrender. Which of us should tell them? The task is not a pleasant one.

CECILY. Could we not both speak at the same time?

GWENDOLEN. An excellent idea! I nearly always speak at the same time as other people. Will you take the time from me?

CECILY. Certainly. [*GWENDOLEN beats time with uplified finger*]

GWENDOLEN and CECILY [*Speaking together*]. Your Christian names are still an insuperable barrier! That is all!

JACK and ALGERNON [*Speaking together*]. Our Christian names! Is that all? But we are going to be christened this afternoon.

GWENDOLEN [*To JACK*]. For my sake you are prepared to do this terrible thing?

JACK. I am.

CECILY [*To ALGERNON*]. To please me you are ready to face this fearful ordeal?

ALGERNON. I am!

GWENDOLEN. How absurd to talk of the equality of the sexes! Where questions of self-sacrifice are concerned, men are infinitely beyond us.

JACK. We are. [*Clasps hands with ALGERNON*]

CECILY. They have moments of physical courage of which we women know absolutely nothing.

GWENDOLEN [*To JACK*]. Darling!

ALGERNON [*To CECILY*]. Darling! [*They fall into each other's arms*]

[*Enter MERRIMAN. When he enters he coughs loudly, seeing the situation*]

MERRIMAN. Ahem! Ahem! Lady Bracknell!

JACK. Good heavens!

[Enter LADY BRACKNELL. *The couples separate in alarm.* Exit MERRIMAN]

LADY BRACKNELL. Gwendolen! What does this mean?

GWENDOLEN. Merely that I am engaged to be married to Mr. Worthing, mamma.

LADY BRACKNELL. Come here. Sit down. Sit down immediately. Hesitation of any kind is a sign of mental decay in the young, of physical weakness in the old. [Turns to JACK] Apprised, sir, of my daughter's sudden flight by her trusty maid, whose confidence I purchased by means of a small coin, I followed her at once by a luggage train. Her unhappy father is, I am glad to say, under the impression that she is attending a more than usually lengthy lecture by the University Extension Scheme on the Influence of a Permanent Income on Thought. I do not propose to undeceive him. Indeed I have never undeceived him on any question. I would consider it wrong. But of course, you will clearly understand that all communication between yourself and my daughter must cease immediately from this moment. On this point, as indeed on all points, I am firm.

JACK. I am engaged to be married to Gwendolen, Lady Bracknell!

LADY BRACKNELL. You are nothing of the kind, sir. And now, as regards Algernon! . . . Algernon!

ALGERNON. Yes, Aunt Augusta.

LADY BRACKNELL. May I ask if it is in this house that your invalid friend Mr. Bunbury resides?

ALGERNON [Stammering]. Oh! No! Bunbury doesn't live here. Bunbury is somewhere else at present. In fact, Bunbury is dead.

LADY BRACKNELL. Dead! When did Mr. Bunbury die? His death must have been extremely sudden.

ALGERNON [Airily]. Oh! I killed Bunbury this afternoon. I mean poor Bunbury died this afternoon.

LADY BRACKNELL. What did he die of?

ALGERNON. Bunbury? Oh, he was quite exploded.

LADY BRACKNELL. Exploded! Was he the victim of a revolutionary outrage? I was not aware that Mr. Bunbury was interested in social legislation. If so, he is well punished for his morbidity.

ALGERNON. My dear Aunt Augusta, I mean he was found out! The doctors found out that Bunbury could not live, that is what I mean—so Bunbury died.

LADY BRACKNELL. He seems to have had great confidence in the opinion of his physicians. I am glad, however, that he made up his mind at the last to some definite course of action, and acted under proper medical advice. And now that we have finally got rid of this Mr. Bunbury, may I ask, Mr. Worthing, who is that young person whose hand my nephew Algernon is now holding in what seems to me a peculiarly unnecessary manner?

JACK. That lady is Miss Cecily Cardew, my ward. [LADY BRACKNELL *bows coldly to CECILY*]

ALGERNON. I am engaged to be married to Cecily, Aunt Augusta.

LADY BRACKNELL. I beg your pardon?

CECILY. Mr. Moncrieff and I are engaged to be married, Lady Bracknell.

LADY BRACKNELL [*With a shiver, crossing to the sofa and sitting down*]. I do not know whether there is anything peculiarly exciting in the air of this particular part of Hertfordshire, but the number of engagements that go on seems to me considerably above the proper average that statistics have laid down for our guidance. I think some preliminary enquiry on my part would not be out of place. Mr. Worthing, is Miss Cardew at all connected with any of the larger railway stations in London? I merely desire information. Until yesterday I had no idea that there were any families or persons whose origin was a Terminus. [JACK *looks perfectly furious, but restrains himself*]

JACK [*In a clear, cold voice*]. Miss Cardew is the granddaughter of the late Mr. Thomas Cardew of 149, Belgrave Square, S.W.; Gervase Park, Dorking, Surrey; and the Sporrán, Fifeshire, N.B.

LADY BRACKNELL. That sounds not unsatisfactory. Three addresses always inspire confidence, even in tradesmen. But what proof have I of their authenticity?

JACK. I have carefully preserved the Court Guides of the period. They are open to your inspection, Lady Bracknell.

LADY BRACKNELL [*Grimly*]. I have known strange errors in that publication.

JACK. Miss Cardew's family solicitors are Messrs. Markby, Markby, and Markby.

LADY BRACKNELL. Markby, Markby, and Markby? A firm of the very highest position in their profession. Indeed I am told that one of the Mr. Markbys is occasionally to be seen at dinner parties. So far I am satisfied.

JACK [*Very irritably*]. How extremely kind of you, Lady Bracknell! I have also in my possession, you will be pleased to hear, certificates of Miss Cardew's birth, baptism, whooping cough, registration, vaccination, confirmation, and the measles; both the German and the English variety.

LADY BRACKNELL. Ah! A life crowded with incident, I see; though perhaps somewhat too exciting for a young girl. I am not myself in favour of premature experiences. [*Rises, looks at her watch*] Gwendolen! the time approaches for our departure. We have not a moment to lose. As a matter of form, Mr. Worthing, I had better ask you if Miss Cardew has any little fortune?

JACK. Oh! about a hundred and thirty thousand pounds in the Funds. That is all. Good-bye, Lady Bracknell. So pleased to have seen you.

LADY BRACKNELL [*Sitting down again*]. A moment, Mr. Worthing. A hundred and thirty thousand pounds! And in the Funds! Miss Cardew seems to me a most attractive young lady, now that I look at her. Few girls

of the present day have any really solid qualities, any of the qualities that last, and improve with time. We live, I regret to say, in an age of surfaces. [To CECILY] Come over here, dear. [CECILY goes across] Pretty child! your dress is sadly simple, and your hair seems almost as Nature might have left it. But we can soon alter all that. A thoroughly experienced French maid produces a really marvellous result in a very brief space of time. I remember recommending one to young Lady Lancing, and after three months her own husband did not know her.

JACK [*Aside*]. And after six months nobody knew her.

LADY BRACKNELL [*Glares at JACK for a few moments. Then bends, with a practised smile, to CECILY*]. Kindly turn round, sweet child. [CECILY turns completely round] No, the side view is what I want. [CECILY presents her profile] Yes, quite as I expected. There are distinct social possibilities in your profile. The two weak points in our age are its want of principle and its want of profile. The chin a little higher, dear. Style largely depends on the way the chin is worn. They are worn very high, just at present. Algernon!

ALGERNON. Yes, Aunt Augusta!

LADY BRACKNELL. There are distinct social possibilities in Miss Cardew's profile.

ALGERNON. Cecily is the sweetest, dearest, prettiest girl in the whole world. And I don't care twopence about social possibilities.

LADY BRACKNELL. Never speak disrespectfully of Society, Algernon. Only people who can't get into it do that. [To CECILY] Dear child, of course you know that Algernon has nothing but his debts to depend upon. But I do not approve of mercenary marriages. When I married Lord Bracknell I had no fortune of any kind. But I never dreamed for a moment of allowing that to stand in my way. Well, I suppose I must give my consent.

ALGERNON. Thank you, Aunt Augusta.

LADY BRACKNELL. Cecily, you may kiss me!

CECILY [*Kisses her*]. Thank you, Lady Bracknell.

LADY BRACKNELL. You may also address me as Aunt Augusta for the future.

CECILY. Thank you, Aunt Augusta.

LADY BRACKNELL. The marriage, I think, had better take place quite soon.

ALGERNON. Thank you, Aunt Augusta.

CECILY. Thank you, Aunt Augusta.

LADY BRACKNELL. To speak frankly, I am not in favour of long engagements. They give people the opportunity of finding out each other's character before marriage, which I think is never advisable.

JACK. I beg your pardon for interrupting you, Lady Bracknell, but this engagement is quite out of the question. I am Miss Cardew's guardian, and she cannot marry without my consent until she comes of age. That consent I absolutely decline to give.

LADY BRACKNELL. Upon what grounds, may I ask? Algernon is an ex-

tremely, I may almost say an ostentatiously, eligible young man. He has nothing, but he looks everything. What more can one desire?

JACK. It pains me very much to have to speak frankly to you, Lady Bracknell, about your nephew, but the fact is I do not approve at all of his moral character. I suspect him of being untruthful. [*ALGERNON and CECILY look at him in indignant amazement*]

LADY BRACKNELL. Untruthful! My nephew Algernon? Impossible! He is an Oxonian.

JACK. I fear there can be no possible doubt about the matter. This afternoon, during my temporary absence in London on an important question of romance, he obtained admission to my house by means of the false pretence of being my brother. Under an assumed name he drank, I've just been informed by my butler, an entire pint bottle of my Perrier-Jouet, Brut, '89; a wine I was specially reserving for myself. Continuing his disgraceful deception, he succeeded in the course of the afternoon in alienating the affections of my only ward. He subsequently stayed to tea, and devoured every single muffin. And what makes his conduct all the more heartless is, that he was perfectly well aware from the first that I have no brother, that I never had a brother, and that I don't intend to have a brother, not even of any kind. I distinctly told him so myself yesterday afternoon.

LADY BRACKNELL. Ahem! Mr. Worthing, after careful consideration I have decided entirely to overlook my nephew's conduct to you.

JACK. That is very generous of you, Lady Bracknell. My own decision, however, is unalterable. I decline to give my consent.

LADY BRACKNELL [*To CECILY*]. Come here, sweet child. [*CECILY goes over*] How old are you, dear?

CECILY. Well, I am really only eighteen, but I always admit to twenty when I go to evening parties.

LADY BRACKNELL. You are perfectly right in making some slight alteration. Indeed, no woman should ever be quite accurate about her age. It looks so calculating. . . . [*In a meditative manner*] Eighteen, but admitting to twenty at evening parties. Well, it will not be very long before you are of age and free from the restraints of tutelage. So I don't think your guardian's consent is, after all, a matter of any importance.

JACK. Pray excuse me, Lady Bracknell, for interrupting you again, but it is only fair to tell you that according to the terms of her grandfather's will Miss Cardew does not come legally of age till she is thirty-five.

LADY BRACKNELL. That does not seem to me to be a grave objection. Thirty-five is a very attractive age. London society is full of women of the very highest birth who have, of their own free choice, remained thirty-five for years. Lady Dumbleton is an instance in point. To my own knowledge she has been thirty-five ever since she arrived at the age of forty, which was many years ago now. I see no reason why our dear Cecily should not be even still more attractive at the age you mention than she is at present. There will be a large accumulation of property.

CECILY. Algy, could you wait for me till I was thirty-five?

ALGERNON. Of course I could, Cecily. You know I could.

CECILY. Yes, I felt it instinctively, but I couldn't wait all that time. I hate waiting even five minutes for anybody. It always makes me rather cross. I am not punctual myself, I know, but I do like punctuality in others, and waiting, even to be married, is quite out of the question.

ALGERNON. Then what is to be done, Cecily?

CECILY. I don't know, Mr. Moncrieff.

LADY BRACKNELL. My dear Mr. Worthing, as Miss Cardew states positively that she cannot wait till she is thirty-five—a remark which I am bound to say seems to me to show a somewhat impatient nature—I would beg of you to reconsider your decision.

JACK. But my dear Lady Bracknell, the matter is entirely in your own hands. The moment you consent to my marriage with Gwendolen, I will most gladly allow your nephew to form an alliance with my ward.

LADY BRACKNELL [*Rising and drawing herself up*]. You must be quite aware that what you propose is out of the question.

JACK. Then a passionate celibacy is all that any of us can look forward to.

LADY BRACKNELL. That is not the destiny I propose for Gwendolen. Algernon, of course, can choose for himself. [*Pulls out her watch*] Come dear; [*GWENDOLEN rises*] we have already missed five, if not six, trains. To miss any more might expose us to comment on the platform.

[*Enter DR. CHASUBLE*]

CHASUBLE. Everything is quite ready for the christenings.

LADY BRACKNELL. The christenings, sir! Is not that somewhat premature?

CHASUBLE [*Looking rather puzzled, and pointing to JACK and ALGERNON*]. Both these gentlemen have expressed a desire for immediate baptism.

LADY BRACKNELL. At their age? The idea is grotesque and irreligious! Algernon, I forbid you to be baptised. I will not hear of such excesses. Lord Bracknell would be highly displeased if he learned that that was the way in which you wasted your time and money.

CHASUBLE. Am I to understand then that there are to be no christenings at all this afternoon?

JACK. I don't think that, as things are now, it would be of much practical value to either of us, Dr. Chasuble.

CHASUBLE. I am grieved to hear such sentiments from you, Mr. Worthing. They savour of the heretical views of the Anabaptists, views that I have completely refuted in four of my unpublished sermons. However, as your present mood seems to be one peculiarly secular, I will return to the church at once. Indeed, I have just been informed by the pew-opener that for the last hour and a half Miss Prism has been waiting for me in the vestry.

LADY BRACKNELL [*Starting*]. Miss Prism! Did I hear you mention a Miss Prism?

CHASUBLE. Yes, Lady Bracknell. I am on my way to join her.

LADY BRACKNELL. Pray allow me to detain you for a moment. This mat-

ter may prove to be one of vital importance to Lord Bracknell and myself. Is this Miss Prism a female of repellant aspect, remotely connected with education?

CHASUBLE [*Somewhat indignantly*]. She is the most cultivated of ladies, and the very picture of respectability.

LADY BRACKNELL. It is obviously the same person. May I ask what position she holds in your household?

CHASUBLE [*Severely*]. I am a celibate, madam.

JACK [*Interposing*]. Miss Prism, Lady Bracknell, has been for the last three years Miss Cardew's esteemed governess and valued companion.

LADY BRACKNELL. In spite of what I hear of her, I must see her at once. Let her be sent for.

CHASUBLE [*Looking off*]. She approaches; she is nigh.

[*Enter MISS PRISM hurriedly*]

MISS PRISM. I was told you expected me in the vestry, dear Canon. I have been waiting for you there for an hour and three-quarters. [*Catches sight of LADY BRACKNELL, who has fixed her with a stony glare. MISS PRISM grows pale and quails. She looks anxiously round as if desirous to escape*]

LADY BRACKNELL [*In a severe, judicial voice*]. Prism! [*MISS PRISM bows her head in shame*] Come here, Prism! [*MISS PRISM approaches in a humble manner*] Prism! Where is that baby? [*General consternation. The Canon starts back in horror. ALGERNON and JACK pretend to be anxious to shield CECILY and GWENDOLEN from hearing the details of a terrible public scandal*] Twenty-eight years ago, Prism, you left Lord Bracknell's house, Number 104, Upper Grosvenor Street, in charge of a perambulator that contained a baby, of the male sex. You never returned. A few weeks later, through the elaborate investigations of the Metropolitan police, the perambulator was discovered at midnight, standing by itself in a remote corner of Bayswater. It contained the manuscript of a three-volume novel of more than usually revolting sentimentality. [*MISS PRISM starts in involuntary indignation*] But the baby was not there! [*Everyone looks at MISS PRISM*] Prism; Where is that baby? [*A pause*]

MISS PRISM. Lady Bracknell, I admit with shame that I do not know. I only wish I did. The plain facts of the case are these. On the morning of the day you mention, a day that is for ever branded on my memory, I prepared as usual to take the baby out in its perambulator. I had also with me a somewhat old, but capacious hand-bag in which I had intended to place the manuscript of a work of fiction that I had written during my few unoccupied hours. In a moment of mental abstraction, for which I never can forgive myself, I deposited the manuscript in the bassinette, and placed the baby in the hand-bag.

JACK [*Who has been listening attentively*]. But where did you deposit the hand-bag?

MISS PRISM. Do not ask me, Mr. Worthing.

JACK. Miss Prism, this is a matter of no small importance to me. I insist on knowing where you deposited the hand-bag that contained that infant.

MISS PRISM. I left it in the cloak-room of one of the larger railway stations in London.

JACK. What railway station?

MISS PRISM [*Quite crushed*]. Victoria. The Brighton line. [*Sinks into a chair*]

JACK. I must retire to my room for a moment. Gwendolen, wait here for me.

GWENDOLEN. If you are not too long, I will wait here for you all my life.

[*Exit JACK in great excitement*]

CHASUBLE. What do you think this means, Lady Bracknell?

LADY BRACKNELL. I dare not even suspect, Dr. Chasuble. I need hardly tell you that in families of high position strange coincidences are not supposed to occur. They are hardly considered the thing.

[*Noises heard overhead as if someone was throwing trunks about. Everyone looks up*]

CECILY. Uncle Jack seems strangely agitated.

CHASUBLE. Your guardian has a very emotional nature.

LADY BRACKNELL. This noise is extremely unpleasant. It sounds as if he was having an argument. I dislike arguments of any kind. They are always vulgar, and often convincing.

CHASUBLE [*Looking up*]. It has stopped now. [*The noise is redoubled*]

LADY BRACKNELL. I wish he would arrive at some conclusion.

GWENDOLEN. This suspense is terrible. I hope it will last.

[*Enter JACK with a hand-bag of black leather in his hand*]

JACK [*Rushing over to MISS PRISM*]. Is this the hand-bag, Miss Prism? Examine it carefully before you speak. The happiness of more than one life depends on your answer.

MISS PRISM [*Calmly*]. It seems to be mine. Yes, here is the injury it received through the upsetting of a Gower Street omnibus in younger and happier days. Here is the stain on the lining caused by the explosion of a temperance beverage, an incident that occurred at Leamington. And here, on the lock, are my initials. I had forgotten that in an extravagant mood I had had them placed there. The bag is undoubtedly mine. I am delighted to have it so unexpectedly restored to me. It has been a great inconvenience being without it all these years.

JACK [*In a pathetic voice*]. Miss Prism, more is restored to you than this hand-bag. I was the baby you placed in it.

MISS PRISM [*Amazed*]. You?

JACK [*Embracing her*]. Yes . . . mother!

MISS PRISM [*Recoiling in indignant astonishment*]. Mr. Worthing! I am unmarried!

JACK. Unmarried! I do not deny that is a serious blow. But after all, who has the right to cast a stone against one who has suffered? Cannot

repentance wipe out an act of folly? Why should there be one law for men, and another for women? Mother, I forgive you. [*Tries to embrace her again*]

MISS PRISM [*Still more indignant*]. Mr. Worthing, there is some error. [*Pointing to LADY BRACKNELL*] There is the lady who can tell you who you really are.

JACK [*After a pause*]. Lady Bracknell, I hate to seem inquisitive, but would you kindly inform me who I am?

LADY BRACKNELL. I am afraid that the news I have to give you will not altogether please you. You are the son of my poor sister, Mrs. Moncrieff, and consequently Algernon's elder brother.

JACK. Algy's elder brother! Then I have a brother after all. I knew I had a brother! I always said I had a brother! Cecily,—how could you have ever doubted that I had a brother. [*Seizes hold of ALGERNON*] Dr. Chasuble, my unfortunate brother. Miss Prism, my unfortunate brother. Gwendolen, my unfortunate brother. Algy, you young scoundrel, you will have to treat me with more respect in the future. You have never behaved to me like a brother in all your life.

ALGERNON. Well, not till to-day, old boy, I admit. I did my best, however, though I was out of practice. [*Shakes hands*]

GWENDOLEN [*To JACK*]. My own! But what own are you? What is your Christian name, now that you have become someone else?

JACK. Good heavens! . . . I had quite forgotten that point. Your decision on the subject of my name is irrevocable, I suppose?

GWENDOLEN. I never change, except in my affections.

CECILY. What a noble nature you have, Gwendolen!

JACK. Then the question had better be cleared up at once. Aunt Augusta, a moment. At the time when Miss Prism left me in the hand-bag, had I been christened already?

LADY BRACKNELL. Every luxury that money could buy, including christening, had been lavished on you by your fond and doting parents.

JACK. Then I was christened! That is settled. Now, what name was I given? Let me know the worst.

LADY BRACKNELL. Being the eldest son you were naturally christened after your father.

JACK [*Irritably*]. Yes, but what was my father's Christian name?

LADY BRACKNELL [*Meditatively*]. I cannot at the present moment recall what the General's Christian name was. But I have no doubt he had one. He was eccentric, I admit. But only in later years. And that was the result of the Indian climate, and marriage, and indigestion, and other things of that kind.

JACK. Algy! Can't you recollect what our father's Christian name was?

ALGERNON. My dear boy, we were never even on speaking terms. He died before I was a year old.

JACK. His name would appear in the Army Lists of the period, I suppose, Aunt Augusta?

LADY BRACKNELL. The General was essentially a man of peace, except in his domestic life. But I have no doubt his name would appear in any military directory.

JACK. The Army Lists of the last forty years are here. These delightful records should have been my constant study. [*Rushes to bookcase and tears the books out*] M. Generals . . . Mallam, Maxbohm, Magley, what ghastly names they have—Markby, Migsby, Mobbs, Moncrieff! Lieutenant 1840, Captain, Lieutenant-Colonel, Colonel, General 1869, Christian names, Ernest John. [*Puts book very quietly down and speaks quite calmly*] I always told you, Gwendolen, my name was Ernest, didn't I? Well, it is Ernest after all. I mean it naturally is Ernest.

LADY BRACKNELL. Yes, I remember that the General was called Ernest. I knew I had some particular reason for disliking the name.

GWENDOLEN. Ernest! My own Ernest! I felt from the first that you could have no other name!

JACK. Gwendolen, it is a terrible thing for a man to find out suddenly that all his life he has been speaking nothing but the truth. Can you forgive me?

GWENDOLEN. I can. For I feel that you are sure to change.

JACK. My own one!

CHASUBLE [*To MISS PRISM*]. Lætitia! [*Embraces her*]

MISS PRISM [*Enthusiastically*]. Frederick! At last!

ALGERNON. Cecily! [*Embraces her*] At last!

JACK. Gwendolen! [*Embraces her*] At last!

LADY BRACKNELL. My nephew, you seem to be displaying signs of triviality.

JACK. On the contrary, Aunt Augusta, I've now realised for the first time in my life the vital Importance of Being Earnest.

SUCCESS STORY¹

by John Howard Lawson

CHARACTERS

SARAH GLASSMAN
DINAH McCABE
JEFFERY HALLIBURTON
RAYMOND MERRITT
RUFUS SONNENBERG

SOL GINSBERG
MARCUS TURNER
AGNES CARTER
HARRY FISHER
MISS FARLEY

ACT ONE

RAYMOND MERRITT's *private office, the Raymond Merritt Co., Inc.*
A Summer Afternoon, 1928.

A richly furnished office, suggesting the center of a prosperous and important business. The room is done in modern style, concealed lighting, the walls panelled in polished mahogany, the furniture is upholstered in heavy green leather. Most of the rear wall is occupied by big windows which look out on an uninterrupted expanse of blue sky. Since the room is on the fortieth floor, no other buildings are visible on the exterior. MERRITT's desk, left center, facing toward right, is a specially constructed desk, a circular affair made of bronze and glass. On the desk an ornamental inkwell, a bronze statue of a naked woman, an onyx clock, a French phone, a silver cigar box. Beside the desk, an inter-office dictaphone. Right rear a door leads to the office of MERRITT's secretary, MISS GLASSMAN. Front right are files built into the mahogany woodwork of the wall. Also built into the wall right front is a panel which slides back to show a small safe where MERRITT keeps important private papers. There are two doors at left, the one at rear leading to a library which MERRITT uses as an accessory to his main office. The door front left leads directly to the corridor of the building, and is generally kept locked. Between these doors, a large map of the United States on the wall. The carpet is of rich neutral material which muffles every footfall. Across the windows rear is a transparent silken curtain which prevents the light from being too glaring, but at the same time gives the figures on the stage the effect of being seen in silhouette. There are heavy curtains which can be drawn across the big windows at night, but which are at present open.

In addition to the big comfortable chairs, two other articles of furniture right center attract one's attention. These are two large models on metal stands. One is a detailed architect's model of a big manufacturing plant, the other a model of a piece of complicated and beautiful machinery; each is complete in every detail and a thing of considerable beauty.

When the curtain rises, the stage is empty.

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The door at right is ajar, and through the opening can be heard the steady monotonous click of a typewriter. After a few moments, the typing stops and SARAH GLASSMAN enters from right, carrying a number of freshly written letters with envelopes, in a neat pile. SARAH is a dark girl of twenty-six, handsome in an Oriental way. Sleek black hair, olive skin, full bodied and vigorous.

She crosses to desk, sets the pile of letters neatly in center of desk. As she turns away, the dictaphone on the desk buzzes and she turns back and moves the proper key.

SARAH [*At dictaphone*]. Yes— [*A man's voice is heard roaring indistinctly in the machine at the other end*] I can't disturb him, Mr. Turner, he's in a very important conference. [*TURNER's voice is heard in the machine, the words "Atlas Motor Company contract" being indistinctly heard*] All right, I'll tell him.

[*The male voice grumbles at the other end and the connection clicks off. SARAH makes a note and puts it on the desk. While SARAH has been speaking, DINAH MC CABE has entered right. DINAH is a thin girl with a peaked face, inefficient, gossipy and unprepossessing. She tries to make up in willingness what she lacks in good sense. She carries some sheets of yellow typewriting paper held together by a clip. While waiting for SARAH to finish she takes a piece of gum from her mouth and a fresh stick from her pocket. She carefully wraps the used gum in the paper from the new stick, puts it in the trash-basket under the desk and proceeds to masticate the fresh piece*]

DINAH. This is terrible important, Miss Glassman—Mr. Halliburton says Mr. Merritt must read it immediately an' talk to him about it.

SARAH [*Taking the yellow sheets and glancing at them*]. Oh yes, the Glamour Cream copy— [*The dictaphone buzzes again. SARAH turns to it*] Yes . . . Miss McCabe is here now, Mr. Halliburton. [*The voice is heard at the other end, "got to see MR. MERRITT immediately . . ." SARAH answers the dictaphone*] It's impossible at present, Mr. Halliburton; he's tied up—I'll tell him— [*The voice on dictaphone: "I'm coming right in."* SARAH clicks off, turns to DINAH. Looking at the yellow sheets of foolscap] You'd better copy this decently, Miss McCabe, half of it's crossed out and written in pencil.

DINAH. He won't let me copy it, he says there ain't time— [*Confidentially, chewing her gum vigorously*] He likes his copy to look messy—he thinks he's a genius, that's what *he* thinks! He says I always spell the words wrong—can I help it if he uses words that ain't in the dictionary!

[JEFFERY HALLIBURTON enters right. He is a very neat young man, dressed in perfectly fitting tweeds, rather handsome in a collegiate way. He has only been out of Yale two years, and is quite sure that he knows more than anybody in the business]

JEFFERY. Where's the Boss, Miss Glassman?

SARAH [*Indicating door left rear*]. He's in the library, Mr. Halliburton.

JEFFERY. This Glamour Cream copy is very urgent; do you suppose I could interrupt him for a minute to explain about it?

SARAH. You could *not*; he's with Mr. Sonnenberg.

JEFFERY. Rufus Sonnenberg?

[SARAH *nods*; JEFFERY *whistles*]

DINAH. Who's that?

JEFFERY. Did you ever hear of Einstein, Miss McCabe? [*She shakes her head*] What Einstein is to mathematics, Sonnenberg is to Wall Street. Do you get the idea? [*Again DINAH shakes her head. JEFFERY turns to SARAH*] It's useless to tell her anything.

[DINAH *looks tearful*]

SARAH [*To DINAH*]. He's a banker, Miss McCabe. [*Holds out the sheets of paper to DINAH*] Kindly make six copies of this and bring it back as quickly as you can.

JEFFERY. I don't want it copied, that's just a rough draft; I want to talk over the general line-up and make the necessary changes. [*DINAH looks from one to the other helplessly*] That's all, Miss McCabe.

DINAH. Yes sir.

[*She exits right*]

SARAH [*To JEFFERY as she turns back to her own office right*]. I'll call you as soon as he's ready.

JEFFERY. I hope he won't be long; I do want to get away early today—[SARAH *shrugs*] And another thing Miss Glassman—I want a different secretary immediately—I hate to make a girl lose her job, I've stood for her a long while because she means well, but she's hopelessly dumb, she can't spell the simplest words—

SARAH [*Interrupting*]. I have nothing to do with that; you'd better speak to Mr. Jones about it, he's in charge of personnel—

[*The door left rear opens and RAYMOND MERRITT walks into the room, followed by SONNENBERG. MERRITT is a big man of thirty-five, blond, good-natured, vigorous, a square jaw and sharp eyes. He offers a good contrast to SONNENBERG, representing as he does the best qualities of Nordic charm. SONNENBERG, on the other hand, is a grey-haired stout Jew, a man of great culture and refinement; his silken voice and his delicately expressive gestures make his suaveness a trifle artificial, but his eyes are wise and kindly*]

SONNENBERG [*As they walk into the room*]. Then we're in complete accord. It simply remains for our lawyers to make our little agreement as complicated as they can.

[HALLIBURTON *immediately becomes a different person; he is not embarrassed but he is on his guard, servile, eager to make a good impression*]

JEFFERY. I hope I'm not in the way, Mr. Merritt?

MERRITT. Not at all, Jeff. [JEFFERY *casts an admiring glance at the great SONNENBERG, and turns to go*] Wait a minute—I want you to meet Mr. Sonnenberg, Mr. Halliburton—

JEFFERY [*Shaking hands*]. How do you do, sir.

[SARAH, *seeing she is not wanted has gone out right*]

MERRITT. One of our coming young men, Mr. Sonnenberg, he's handling some of our important accounts in the fields of drugs and specialties.

SONNENBERG. Nothing like youthful vision in business—

JEFFERY. I had the privilege of knowing your son at Yale, Mr. Sonnenberg.

SONNENBERG. From what I've seen of his friends, I can only hope that you were not one of them!

JEFFERY. I . . . well, hardly—I— [SONNENBERG *is glancing at his watch, winding it absently*. JEFFERY *takes his cue, turning to MERRITT*] I've got a great set-up on the Glamour Cream campaign, Mr. Merritt—see you later about it. [MERRITT *nods*. JEFFERY *bows to SONNENBERG*] It means a lot to me to have met you, Mr. Sonnenberg.

SONNENBERG [*Nods vaguely*]. Thank you.

[JEFFERY *exits right, closing the door after him*]

MERRITT. Just a moment . . . I'll get you the data we were discussing.

[*He is at his desk*. SONNENBERG *sits in easy-chair right of desk*]

SONNENBERG. Thank you . . . purely a formality; my banking associates insist on detailed figures.

MERRITT. I'm glad the impression is favorable. [*Sitting at desk, he moves a key on the dictaphone—a male voice answers "Hello"*] Is that you Fisher? [*The voice answers, "Out for the afternoon—can I do something for you?"—but before the voice has finished, MERRITT rings off, and presses a buzzer under his desk, addressing SONNENBERG apologetically*] My statistician doesn't seem to be on hand.

SONNENBERG. Oh that's all right; send it down by messenger in the morning.

[SARAH *enters right, note-book in hand*]

MERRITT. Where's Fisher?

SARAH. He went to his wife's funeral—

MERRITT. Too bad! [*Rising*] Will you excuse me for a moment, Mr. Sonnenberg? I'll go and dig up the information myself from the files.

SARAH. Mr. Fisher's assistant can give you anything you want on a moment's notice, Mr. Merritt.

MERRITT. Can he? I doubt it . . .

SARAH. He knows the files from A to Z.

MERRITT. Does he really? Then tell him I want the report of our operations for the last fiscal year ending May first—not the abbreviated form, but the full report; also the charts of advertising distribution and sales according to industry and according to territory; also the plans for development in

California and Northwest— [*Turning to SONNENBERG*] I believe that will give you the authoritative picture your associates require.

SONNENBERG. It sounds both exhaustive and exhausting.

MERRITT [*To SARAH who noted what he said in her short-hand book*]. Tell him to have that here in two minutes and to have it right. [*SARAH nods and exits right. MERRITT continues to SONNENBERG*] I'm proud of my statistical department. This chap Fisher is a genius with charts and diagrams. [*SONNENBERG nods and rises, walking about the room*] Statistics are the nerve center of a business such as ours.

SONNENBERG. Oh quite . . . quite . . .

[*He is looking at the models on stand right*]

MERRITT. The new type of merchandising service is entirely dependent on two sciences: In the first place, industrial analysis of sales appeal, density of market, buying power; in the second place, psychology, the knowledge of people's whims, desires, phobias . . . [*SONNENBERG nods*] The sales counsel must have those two sciences in the hollow of his hand.

SONNENBERG [*Staring at model of factory right, interrupts MERRITT with a casual wave of his hand*]. You talk well, Mr. Merritt, almost too well!

MERRITT [*Rises and joins him*]. What does that mean?

SONNENBERG. I am a great admirer of glibness, but in a close financial association I prefer candor.

MERRITT. You're clever—that scientific talk is about seven-eighths bosh.

SONNENBERG. And the remaining eighth is poetry. I am not giving you my support because you hold science and psychology in the hollow of your hand, you have sanity and good education; you've built up a successful business from a small beginning. By the way, how much did you start with?

MERRITT. Fifty thousand.

SONNENBERG. Where did you get it? These little details are always of great interest to me.

MERRITT. An inheritance from my grandmother.

SONNENBERG. Good! Now that you have millions to play with, don't lose your head; let science and psychology be your handmaidens, but don't be beguiled by their rather wanton charms.

MERRITT. A word to the wise!

SONNENBERG [*Studying the factory model with great interest*]. These industrial plants have a genuine aesthetic quality . . . not a bad substitute for the Gothic cathedral!

MERRITT. That's the new works of the Atlas Motor Company at Great Bend.

[*SOL GINSBERG enters right, carrying several folders and charts. He is a handsome boy of twenty-five. He is tough, uncouth, sombre; he bristles with East Side mannerisms, which he tries to cover up with an unsatisfactory seriousness. He is self-educated, sharp and imaginative, full of undigested ideas and impressions. He is egotistic and hot-tempered. His clothes are baggy and ill fitting, and his shirt*

rather dirty—he has absolutely no consciousness of personal neatness. This is the first time he has been called to MERRITT's office and he is excited and annoyed at himself for being nervous or impressed]

MERRITT [*Glances at sol good-naturedly*]. That's quick work.

SOL [*Gives a covert glance at SONNENBERG as he crosses to the desk*]. I got everything here you asked for, Mr. Merritt. [*Opening one of the folders*] Here's the report of operations—

SONNENBERG [*Tapping the pile of folders*]. This is a regular encyclopedia. I'll have a boy carry it down to my car.

MERRITT. You don't need all this truck—I'll assemble the important material in one folder for you—

SOL. You asked me for the charts on the different industries, Mr. Merritt, so I brought the whole thing—

MERRITT [*Looking through the folders vaguely, while sol stands beside the desk ready to butt in at the proper moment*]. Your people are particularly interested in our plans for expansion in the West—

SOL [*Picking out the folder expertly*]. Here's the stuff you want—

MERRITT [*Glancing through the papers and charts*]. Yes, here's the map of population density—here's the distribution of our products and analysis of rival products—

SONNENBERG. Very instructive. I'm amazed at how much detail you have here—

MERRITT. It's kept up to date daily.

SOL. Every week. . . .

SONNENBERG [*To MERRITT*]. It's very nice to have the information, but I wonder if any of your executives take the trouble to consult it?

MERRITT [*For the first time sol grins, starts to speak, but holds his own counsel. MERRITT looks over the folders rather angrily*]. Why in hell isn't there a short summary of this material?

SOL [*Producing a small packet of filing cards from his pocket*]. There is—in these here filing cards—I worked 'em out myself—

MERRITT [*Thumbing over the cards*]. That's all you need, that's very satisfactory.

SONNENBERG. Have you copies of all this data?

SOL. Sure, the reports are mimeographed, and we make three copies of all the charts.

SONNENBERG [*Looking at sol's eager, serious face with a flicker of kindly interest*]. What's your name, young man?

SOL. Ginsberg . . . Solomon Ginsberg.

MERRITT. That's all, Ginsberg. Come back for the rest of this later.

SOL [*Starts to speak, thinks better of it, mutters*]. O. K.

[*And exits right*]

MERRITT [*As sol goes, assembling the sheets and maps*]. I think this will be quite sufficient for your needs.

SONNENBERG [*Paying no attention, absently looking after sol*]. A sharp

young man,— [MERRITT *nods agreeably*. SONNENBERG *continues with thoughtful cynicism*] The Russian Jews are the world's most gifted and most difficult people, Mr. Merritt—

MERRITT. You don't say; I never gave it a thought!

SONNENBERG [*Taking the file of papers which MERRITT offers him*]. These will do very nicely. [*Turning to door right*] Your lawyer can call mine and arrange the details.

MERRITT [*At door front left*]. This way if you don't mind—this will spare you the walk through the office.

SONNENBERG. Thank you. [*He shakes hands with MERRITT*] From now on we are practically partners.

MERRITT. I hope you'll never have cause to regret it.

SONNENBERG. Win or lose, I'm sure our personal contacts will always be as delightfully cordial as at present. [*They both smile*] Good day.

[SONNENBERG *exits left*. MERRITT *closes the door*. He *walks tiredly to his desk, sits down, presses the buzzer under the desk*. SARAH *enters right, with her notebook*. She *approaches the desk*. MERRITT *is staring moodily at his hands, clenched on the glassy surface in front of him*. SARAH *waits patiently*. After a moment, she *enquires evenly*]

SARAH. You want me?

MERRITT [*Looks up at her, smiles*]. Sure . . . I want to talk to you . . . talk to somebody human—bankers aren't human.

SARAH. You look tired, Mr. Merritt.

MERRITT. I am; going out and get a flock of drinks after a while, but first I need sympathy, a woman's sympathy—which I'm sure you'll be glad to give me, Miss Glassman.

SARAH. I . . .

MERRITT. I'm kidding you, Miss Glassman. I feel pretty good; everybody in this concern should feel pretty good. Do you realize what I just pulled off with Sonnenberg, Miss Glassman?

SARAH. From what I overheard I supposed it was all settled at last.

MERRITT. At last we've agreed on every point; it puts this concern right on top of the heap, unlimited backing, money to expand— [*He hesitates*] I don't know whether I'm glad or sorry.

SARAH. Why?

MERRITT. It's a big change . . . this business has been my private affair. I made it . . . now it's going to be bigger than ever, but it's going to be a corporation with a lot of Wall Street gorillas pulling the strings . . . [*He shrugs good-naturedly*] Sonnenberg and I keep a working control of the stock between us . . . I fought for two weeks to keep a majority of stock in my own hands, but Sonnenberg's a slippery old whale. . . .

[*He laughs*]

SARAH. Naturally . . . those bankers aren't in business for their health.

MERRITT. Sure, but it's got me worried . . . what I mean is . . . sometimes I think I'm a great man, Miss Glassman. Other times I think it's all

the bunk—I mean myself—it's not so much a great business brain that's put me where I am . . . it's just that I manage to put over my personality.

SARAH. Honest. . . I think pretty near everything in this world is just personality salesmanship.

MERRITT. I like to think of myself as a real thinker, get me? A wise guy! But I'm always afraid I'm just a smart mixer that talks his way into things.

SARAH. But that's the whole game, talk people into buying things they don't want, in print, magazines, signboards, over the radio . . . sell, sell, make yourself believe that selling is a religion.

MERRITT. Do you believe that?

SARAH. No, but that's what all the dumb-bells believe—I guess you don't want too much brains around here.

MERRITT. You're too bright yourself, Miss Glassman.

SARAH. Honest, Mr. Merritt, I didn't mean to be fresh.

MERRITT. Not at all, you're dead right . . . too much brains is no go . . . and you've got 'em. I'm not at all sure a clever girl like you isn't a misfit compared to the others. But don't worry, some way or other your head will get you a long way.

SARAH. It hasn't got me much yet.

MERRITT. You wait, we're growing up; no reason at all you shouldn't grow with us.

SARAH. Thanks . . . you *are* feeling good. [*She glances at the pile of statistics left on the desk*] Did Mr. Ginsberg bring you the right material, Mr. Merritt?

MERRITT. Sure; who is that fellow Ginsberg?

SARAH. He's been here four months—you probably don't remember but I recommended him.

MERRITT. Oh, I recall. . . I told Fisher to do whatever you advised—a friend of yours?

SARAH [*Nods*]. I've known him since we were children. We come from the same tenement.

MERRITT. Really? . . .

SARAH [*Glances at clock*]. It's late, Mr. Merritt, and you have a lot of things to attend to—

MERRITT. All right, don't rush me; first off I'll straighten out the legal end of this with Turner. [*He moves a key on the dictaphone. A male voice at the other end says, "Hello."* MERRITT *speaks over the dictaphone*] It's all set, Mark, the Sonnenberg deal . . . absolutely. . . Sure it's good. . . There's a dozen points I want to take up with you. . . No, I'll come right over to your office; I want you to have your reference books handy. . . Right away. [*He clicks off, looks up at SARAH*] Get me all your memoranda on the banking deal.

SARAH. Yes sir.

[*She exits right, leaving the door open. MERRITT rises and starts across*

to right. JEFFERY, who has evidently been waiting in SARAH's office appears right]

JEFFERY. How about me, Mr. Merritt, I've been waiting?

MERRITT. I'll get to you later, Jeff.

[SARAH re-enters right, with sheets of pink memorandum paper, which she hands to MERRITT]

JEFFERY. I'm worried about this copy, Mr. Merritt, it's got to go out to eighteen women's magazines tonight.

MERRITT. Don't get so het up about it; take his temperature, Miss Glassman, I think he's got a fever. . . . *[He starts to go, turns to SARAH again]* Sign my name to those letters and send 'em out.

SARAH. You haven't looked them over.

MERRITT. I don't need to— *[Waving a hand to JEFFERY]* See you later, Jeff.

[He exits right. JEFFERY picks up the yellow sheets of copy on the desk, looks at them—ruefully]

JEFF *[To SARAH]*. I suppose he hasn't looked at this?

SARAH. No, he's been exceedingly busy.

JEFFERY. Well, I'm going to stay planted right here till he comes back. *[He sits on MERRITT's desk, picks up the telephone]* A line, please.

[SOL enters through open door right. JEFFERY is at the telephone, dialing]

SOL *[To SARAH]*. Is it all right if I get my stuff from the files now?

[SARAH nods. SOL goes to the desk to get his papers. JEFFERY is talking over the phone]

JEFFERY. Is that you, Edwards? Miss Estabrook, please . . . Miss Virginia Estabrook . . . this is Mr. Halliburton. *[SOL is trying to pull a set of maps from under the phone. JEFFERY looks up annoyed]* Just a minute please, if you don't mind. *[SOL looks gloomier than ever and waits, listening to the conversation with a frown]* Hello, sweet . . . yes, your voice sounds a little vague . . . is the whole crowd there? . . . no, I'm tied up in knots. . . . Sure I can hear the ice tinkling in the shaker—I'll try to make the dinner party, but if I don't I'll turn up at the theatre. . . . Cheerio! *[He rings off, rises, addresses SOL with pleasant but rather condescending courtesy]* Sorry to keep you waiting.

SOL *[Imitating his polite manner]*. Don't mention it, we enjoyed the cock-tails!

[SOL is assembling his data on the desk]

JEFFERY *[Turns to SARAH]*. I'm missing an excellent party . . . but it can't be helped! I guess big things are afoot around here, aren't they, Miss Glassman?

SARAH. I really can't discuss it.

JEFFERY. Sonnenberg gave *me* the impression he was going to take an active interest here.

SOL. Yeh, he gave me an earful too—"Ginsberg," he says, "let's throw out the college boys an' get some real men in this lousy concern."

[JEFFERY looks at SOL angrily. SARAH, worried, puts her hand on SOL's arm]

SARAH. Please—

JEFFERY [*With an attempt to be very dignified and severe*]. I've had enough from you, Ginsberg.

SOL. I had plenty from you.

JEFFERY. I'm civil and I expect other people to be civil in return.

SOL. Yeh, you were civil yesterday when you bawled me out in front of the whole office. . . .

JEFFERY. I told you you'd given me a set of inaccurate figures and caused me a lot of trouble. . . .

SOL. Them figures was right an' your stenographer copied 'em wrong.

JEFFERY [*Calmly feeling quite master of the situation*]. You're an assistant clerk here, Ginsberg: when a member of the staff criticises your work you ought to take it in the right spirit and remedy the mistake—If you'll bear it in mind, I shall be entirely civil to you.

SOL [*Trying to control himself*]. If you're not civil, I'll take care of it in my own way.

[DINAH MC CABE enters right]

DINAH. Mr. Halliburton, Mr. Rogers, from Ryan and Malevinsky is here to see you about the Sunday spread.

JEFFERY. Good Lord! I'd forgotten all about it. [*He hurries through the door right, calling to SARAH as he goes*] Call me the minute Mr. Merritt's ready.

[*He exits*]

SOL. I'll show him.

DINAH. What's the matter, Mr. Ginsberg? Did Mr. Halliburton bawl you out again?

SOL. Never mind.

DINAH [*Looking around to see that no one is within earshot*]. I don't like him either . . . every time I make a mistake he says he's gonna have me canned—

SOL. Why don't you use your sex appeal, kid? Next time he calls you down, jump on his lap an' rumple his hair—that's Miss Glassman's system with the boss an' look how well she's gettin' on.

SARAH. Oh, shut up, Sol!

[SOL has seated himself on MERRITT's desk]

DINAH. You got your nerve, sittin' on the boss's desk.

SOL. It's my desk now, he give it to me—You see, I'm a fraternity brother of his, so he says to me, "Take this money-trap home, I'm gonna install a pool-table here for myself an' the staff!"

DINAH. Gee, you're fresh. . . . If I told on you, you'd get fired!

[*She flounces out right, leaving the door open*]

SARAH [*Coming to SOL seriously*]. Don't you know she'll repeat every word you say? You couldn't pick a better way to lose your job!

SOL. I know it. . . . I know what I'm doin'!

SARAH. If you feel that way, why don't you tell Merritt to his face, instead of making silly jokes behind his back?

SOL. I will! I'm gonna walk in here and spill some things to Merritt that will make his hair curl!

SARAH. You'd better think twice.

SOL. I thought a hundred times.

SARAH. It's a big step to quit.

SOL [*Shrugs uneasily*]. Sick of it, that's all.

SARAH. Wait . . . [*Speaking as she crosses to open door right*] I want to ask you something. . . . [*She shuts the door. During the following scenes, both SARAH and SOL speak in rather low voices*] What are you going to do if you quit here? Have you got any plan, or are you going to be just as confused as you are now?

SOL. I ain't confused—this place don't suit me—there's nuthin' in it for me.

SARAH. You're getting more money than you ever got in your life before.

SOL. Yeh . . . twenty-five a week, an' you get seven bucks more than I do—

SARAH. At least it's nice for us to work in the same office.

SOL. It's nice for *you*—you're in a soft spot—you're a swell secretary locked in here with the boss—everybody yesses you 'cause you're on the inside—you don't get kicked around an' spat at by loafers like Halliburton—

SARAH. Why don't you have a frank talk with Mr. Merritt? Maybe he'd give you a raise and put you in another department.

SOL. Yeh! Maybe he'd make me vice-president an' general manager—when I come in here a little while ago, he didn't even know my name—treated me like an office boy—

SARAH. He asked me who you were—

SOL. Did he?

SARAH [*Nods*]. He tries to be nice to everybody—I worked for three other concerns before I came here and he's the only human being I ever had for a boss.

SOL. Oh, I got his number all right—he's a lazy smart-aleck—he gets big accounts 'cause he's a hand shaker an' he belongs to a lot of nifty clubs—all he's gotta do is sit here an' rake in the dough—

[*He opens a drawer of MERRITT's desk*]

SARAH. I wouldn't do that if I were you.

SOL. Cards an' cigars—I'll bet he sits here playin' solitaire. Where does he keep his liquor?

SARAH. In the library—Please stop looking through those drawers—I know more about Mr. Merritt than you do . . . he *does* waste a lot of time,

but that's his way of working; I take his dictation and I ought to know; this is a complicated business and he's got his finger on every part of it—

SOL. He's got his finger on you all right.

SARAH. He's decent and he's intelligent—he makes money because he's got a lot of personality and a nose for business—

SOL. What about my nose? Does it look bad to you?

SARAH. What's the matter with you, Sol—what have you got against Mr. Merritt?

SOL. Go on, sleep with him!

SARAH. Sol—

SOL. That's what your raving about his personality amounts to—He's soft on you an' you eat it alive— Personality, bah! Don't you know where he keeps his? Go on, I don't blame you . . . maybe he'll raise your salary two bucks a week!

SARAH. So that's what you think? That's what our love amounts to?

SOL. Why don't you set that to music?

SARAH. I can't stand your going on like this—I'm the one you hurt—you like to hurt me, you like it. . . .

SOL. No. . . . I don't mean to hurt you. . . .

SARAH. You and me are the same . . . we're everything to each other . . . I hope. . . .

SOL [*Gruffly, very much touched*]. We said so enough times!

SARAH. I couldn't live without you, Sol; I mean the future for us together. I'd die without you.

SOL. Yeh, we dreamed about the future, but it don't get any nearer.

SARAH. That's up to us, if we care enough—

SOL [*Interrupting her*]. Don't now . . . you hurt me. . . . [*He kisses her, pushes her away roughly*] There's no future without money, I must get it . . . I been waiting for a break ever since I was born!

SARAH. We had one good break, each other.

SOL. What good is that? When you're in bad with life, two is no better than one.

SARAH. Two people can stand together, protect each other.

SOL. Protect! . . . thicken your skin, kid, you need a thick skin, you're too soft.

SARAH. So are you; you're soft and emotional as a woman.

SOL. Aw hell!

SARAH. You don't look it, but I know.

SOL. Maybe I was soft, but I'm gettin' over it fast.

SARAH. You have changed some, Sol.

SOL. Sure I'm changin'. I had enough watchin' other people rake in the money, people like that fool, Merritt— [*He points to the desk, derisive and defiant, as if MERRITT were actually sitting in the empty chair*] Sometime I'll get my mitts on that bozo an' when he comes up for air he'll be all bloody, an' then I'll bust up the whole place 'cause it smells of money . . . break

up these little partitions that shut off one fool from another fool . . . to Hell with 'em, yours for the revolution, signed, Solomon Ginsberg!

SARAH. That would be a big help for the revolution, wouldn't it? [*Pleading*] You and me have learned a lot together, we've studied and read and gone to meetings. . . .

SOL. Sure, we're chock full of Marx and Lenin, but when you come up against a cheap capitalist grafter like Merritt, you fall for him.

SARAH. That's childish, Sol . . . why don't you grow up and see things straight? . . . we both know there's crazy social injustice . . . that's no reason for gettin' sore at *people*. . . .

SOL. What does all the talk mean? It means we ain't got a look-in on the cash, an' we're sore at them that's got it.

SARAH. It means a great deal more than that to me.

SOL. I'm sick to death of radical meetings an' sour-faced people an' cheap gab. . . .

SARAH. We can't help being part of a system, but we can keep our heads clear.

SOL. On twenty-five dollars?

SARAH. But your spirit, Sol, your spirit?

SOL. My father had a spirit too, him an' me used to sit in his newsstand under the El at Houston Street till his spirit went up one night an' he froze dead under my eyes.

SARAH. You're exaggerating as usual.

SOL. Oh it's near enough . . . anyway the old man died two weeks later an' he caught cold in the stand, didn't he? . . . When I think a' the old boy . . . [*Shaking off the idea*] Oh what's the use? . . . You an' me ain't even workers, we're white collar slaves in a business built out a' smart lies.

SARAH. I'd rather be here than working in a factory for eight dollars a week like most of the girls I know.

SOL. I can't help seein' that the revolution ain't gonna happen next week. . . . Say, I wouldn't be surprised if it didn't happen all summer.

SARAH. Can't you look just a little farther ahead?

SOL. Sure, but when's my pay-day?

SARAH. That's cheap—

SOL. You're the cheap one; you get such a kick out of your own ravings, you don't look at facts. . . . I'll spend my life waitin' for a break, an' never get it. . . . You know how hot the sand is on your bare feet down at Coney? Them's the years I see, walkin' with blistered feet over them hot years, nuthin' but the sky ahead, till the pearly gates open in the sky an' there isn't any more.

SARAH. You must forget yourself and worry about other things.

SOL. Not me, I got myself on my mind!

SARAH. That's unhealthy.

SOL. Who, me? Unhealthy?

[*The door opens right, and MERRITT enters with MARCUS TURNER. The*

two men are walking arm in arm chatting and laughing as they come. TURNER is a heavy-jowled sensual man of forty-five; he might have been a prominent member of the bar, but has preferred to devote himself to women and liquor. He now has a comfortable berth as counsel for the Raymond Merritt Company at twenty-five thousand a year. He is invaluable to MERRITT, who likes him and understands him]

TURNER [*As they walk in, evidently telling a long anecdote*]. The old hens were furious, said I had no right to bring a woman like that to the country club.

MERRITT. Did you leave?

TURNER. I'll say we didn't; we got tight and Myrtle nearly wrecked the place.

[*Neither of the men pay any attention to SOL and SARAH, who stand waiting*]

MERRITT [*Turning to door, left rear*]. Come in here, we'll have a little thirst quencher.

TURNER. That's exactly what I'm looking for, R. M.

[*They walk into the library left, shutting the door. SOL looks after them with bitter disgust*]

SOL. Saps . . . gold-plated saps!

SARAH. It's up to you? Are you going to stick here and adjust yourself—or are you going to wear out shoe leather looking for another job?

SOL. I dunno. . . . I want somethin' real—either make real money, or else . . . work for somethin' I believe in.

SARAH. But you've got to be practical—there's a real chance here—

SOL. One chance in a hundred.

SARAH. Sure, it's one in a thousand anywhere else. Do you want to go back to being a waiter in that kosher quick lunch?

SOL. It's with my own kind at least. I got no place in this genteel racket—I wisht I had the nerve to learn to be a gunman like my brother—

SARAH. You were called to something else, you got to be true to what you're called to.

SOL. What—

[*TURNER and MERRITT re-enter left rear*]

TURNER. Excellent, I must have a few cases sent up to my place.

MERRITT [*Going to his desk*]. It's the smoothest rye I've been able to find.

TURNER. I think I'll duck . . . I'll have a conference with Sonnenberg's attorney in the morning, and then we'll know where we stand.

MERRITT. You're convinced that the set-up is O. K.?

TURNER. With the proper legal safeguards, it's magnificent, R. M. Cheerio! [*He turns away, nodding genially to MISS GLASSMAN*] Good night, Miss Glassman.

SARAH. Good night.

[*TURNER exits right. MERRITT looks at SOL who is waiting sullenly*]

MERRITT. What are you hanging around for?

SOL. I came in to get that stuff from my files, Mr. Merritt. [*Approaching the desk*] But that ain't all . . . I want to talk to you.

MERRITT [*Looking up at SOL with friendly interest, sizing him up*]. Is that so? All right, stick around a while; if I don't get to it this evening, I'll see you tomorrow. [SOL nods and starts to take the folders from desk. MERRITT puts his hand on the folders] Leave them here—I'll look 'em over. [SARAH is watching nervously] Your name's Ginsberg, isn't it?

SOL. That's right.

MERRITT. You seem to do good work on this stuff.

SOL. That ain't the half of it.

MERRITT. Huh!

SOL. I mean I do better than that.

MERRITT. You Jews are a funny lot, you beat the Dutch.

SOL. Every time.

MERRITT. Sometime I'm going to give you a big chance.

SOL. Why not today?

MERRITT. It's too hot today, you wouldn't want a chance— [*Dismissing him with a wave of his hand*] I'll send 'for you later, Ginsberg.

SOL. I'll be waitin'.

[*He turns and exits*]

MERRITT. I told you to sign these letters and send them out.

SARAH. I know it . . . frankly, Mr. Ginsberg and I have been talking ever since you left.

MERRITT. Really? I appreciate your frankness. If people said what they meant, business would be cleaner.

SARAH. I'm afraid there wouldn't be any advertising, Mr. Merritt.

MERRITT. I begin to value you very highly, Miss Glassman.

SARAH. You mean you're trying to value me, you're not sure yet.

MERRITT. No, when I get the value settled I'll make my offer.

SARAH. Below market figures?

MERRITT. That's sagacious, isn't it?

SARAH. You'll have to bid pretty high, Mr. Merritt.

MERRITT. Tell me, Miss Glassman, what are you after?

SARAH. I'm after keeping my job, it means a lot to me—without getting in any more disagreeable talks with you—

MERRITT. I don't mean that—I mean what do you want in life? Everybody's got some key that they're after—that's the secret of advertising.

SARAH. Oh . . . what about yourself?

MERRITT. I'm pretty much at sea—that's why I ask you. . . . If you knew me, you'd like me and maybe feel sorry for me—

SARAH. You!

MERRITT. I don't get much out of life, in fact I make rather a mess of it . . . I'm not even as rich as people think I am . . . you ought to know that, you handle all the money. . . .

SARAH. From my standards, you're disgustingly rich.

MERRITT. Am I? What sort of people do you come from?

SARAH. Very poor . . . East Side . . . You can't picture it.

MERRITT. Funny the way we're caught together way up here in a tower. A lot of queer fish in a money net.

[*Telephone rings. SARAH answers it*]

SARAH. Yes, Mr. Merritt will speak to him. [*Handing phone to MERRITT*]
Mr. Albert Flannigan.

MERRITT [*On phone*]. Hello, Flannigan . . . yes, that's substantially correct. You're damn right, we'll sell it at twenty-eight dollars. Ask your own stenographer if she won't pay twenty-eight dollars for a cream made out of alligator glands—genuine eighteen karat alligator glands—I've seen the alligators myself! There's big money behind it and I advise you to get on the bandwagon . . . you've never lost money by taking my advice yet. . . . Good for you, Flannigan—give my best to the missus. [*He rings off, sits back amused*] Glamour Cream is driving the beauty trade crazy.

SARAH. It sounds swell. I wish I had some.

MERRITT. I'll give you a few jars, but you don't need it . . . Glamour Cream for you is just painting the lily.

SARAH. I think it will sell, Mr. Merritt, just because it *is* so expensive . . . women are all alike . . . they want anything that costs a lot and looks showy.

MERRITT. Are *you* like that?

SARAH. A little. . . .

MERRITT [*Glances at clock*]. It's after six now—we'll go and get some cocktails at a little place on Forty-fourth Street.

SARAH. No thanks.

MERRITT. Afraid?

SARAH. Don't be ridiculous. Afraid of you! That is, I just mean you're a gentleman, and you're very nice to work for; it's great here but you see I was expecting this.

MERRITT. Are you a mind reader?

SARAH. You're easy. I can tell how a man looks at me, besides you raised my salary; it's not much, but it means something from you; you wouldn't do that for no reason. Then again you never held my hand or touched me, which is so unusual it makes a girl expect the worst, that's how I knew it was coming. Now if I got enough breath, I'll tell you why I gotta say no. . . . First 'cause I got brains, that's a big enough reason right there, but second cause you'd despise me.

MERRITT. Not a bit of it.

SARAH. Well, maybe not, I guess I'm bright enough to keep you guessing, but anyway I got another fellow.

MERRITT. I'll say you cover the ground, but reasons don't count in these matters; I might be able to make you happy a little.

SARAH. That's Christian of you, but you see I'm Jewish and miserable.

MERRITT. Score one, I have no answer . . . But give me credit, I don't do this sort of thing often.

SARAH. Oh yes you do, I'm your secretary and I ought to know.

MERRITT. Score two . . . but my interest in women is just nervousness. . . . I'm so bored: nothing I want outside this office—now you haven't told me what you want? The inside thing that makes you so sure of yourself?

SARAH. If I told you, you'd think I was crazy—a kind of ideal you couldn't dream of.

MERRITT. You haven't much respect for my character, have you?

SARAH. You're nice but you don't go very deep.

MERRITT. Ideals, huh. [*He walks around the room, nervous and depressed*] Maybe that's what I need. Funny, isn't it? We work together for years without any human contact—

SARAH. I'm sorry for you now I know you a little better.

MERRITT. I won't bother you this way again . . . I don't want to lose you—

[*He stops short as AGNES CARTER enters right. She is a delicious blonde, beautiful and slightly artificial, expensively and charmingly dressed. A creamy complexion, and large melting eyes*]

AGNES. I just dashed in; can I see you for a minute, Raymond?

MERRITT. For a minute only, Aggie.

AGNES. Don't look so sour, Raymond, Miss Glassman wasn't in her office so I just walked in . . . it's late and I thought you were all alone.

SARAH [*To MERRITT as she turns to leave*]. You won't forget about Mr. Halliburton, will you?

MERRITT. There's nobody I'd rather forget.

SARAH. And Mr. Ginsberg?

MERRITT. Miss Carter will only be here two minutes.

AGNES. Don't you believe him, Miss Glassman; I'll stay as long as I like.

SARAH. I'm sure you will.

[*She exits*]

MERRITT [*Marching about the room nervously*]. You're really impossible, Aggie; you have no sense of proportion.

AGNES. What's the idea? Are you having an affair with Miss Glassman?

MERRITT. I'm simply thinking of appearances. You sweep in here as if you were bringing a message from the Pope; this is my office.

AGNES [*Rising*]. Shall I go back and do it all over again?

[*Turning to the door*]

MERRITT. Don't be absurd. What do you want?

AGNES. Money—money—money—

MERRITT. Charming, you're so nice and subtle about it.

AGNES. I'm much too nice to be subtle and you know it. . . . I don't know how to be coy, and you wouldn't like me if I were. . . . If I'm not satisfactory, you can kick me off the payroll.

MERRITT. You're one of the most annoying women the devil ever created. The way you get rid of money is simply delirious. What do you do with it?

AGNES. It burns my fingers. Every time you give me a check I feel so immoral I run out and buy a dozen new gowns!

MERRITT. You're crazy.

[*He rings buzzer on desk*]

AGNES. A little . . . but I'm honest . . . I know you, and I know myself and I have no girlish illusions.

[*SARAH enters right*]

MERRITT. Will you make out a check please . . . the usual amount?

AGNES. I'm sorry to trouble you, Miss Glassman.

SARAH. Oh, it's no trouble at all.

[*She exits*]

MERRITT [*Calling after SARAH*]. I'll sign it for her as she goes out.

AGNES. I wonder what she thinks of it?

MERRITT. She thinks it's shockingly indecent, and she's damn glad she's an honest woman.

AGNES. That's where I'm right with her.

MERRITT. What? Want a job in the office, Aggie?

AGNES. No. . . . I haven't got the character. . . .

MERRITT. Then don't be so morbid; everything between us has been square and on the level. We trust each other, we're good pals, and we have an exceptionally straightforward understanding.

AGNES. Sure, as far as it goes it's swell—

MERRITT. What's really on your mind? Sore at me?

AGNES. Not at you, you big slob. . . . I'm sore about money, because you've got it and I haven't and it's so damn important—

MERRITT. I notice you take it freely.

AGNES. Sure, that's what makes me so mad.

MERRITT. You're a scream, a pathetic little thing who simply can't make both ends meet on a thousand a month.

AGNES. You're generous, in fact you're rather a fool to be as generous as you are.

MERRITT. Then why complain about your tragic fate?

AGNES. It isn't tragic. It's undignified—

MERRITT. And what do you suggest to give it dignity?

AGNES. Why don't we make it nicer? Why don't you marry me, Ray?

MERRITT. Is money the chief consideration?

AGNES. I'm too honest to pretend it's not, but money in a big clean way!

MERRITT. You don't love me?

AGNES. No, but I might get to, if I had plenty of leisure to concentrate my mind on it! . . . and you must consider, you're pretty crazy about me.

MERRITT. No, I'm not.

AGNES. Oh, be yourself, Ray . . . you know how you feel!

MERRITT I've given it considerable thought, Aggie; I have a lot of respect for you.

AGNES. That's a funny thing to say—

MERRITT. Why not? You're hard boiled and wise and a hundred percent decent—you're an unusual girl, and you could probably make some man very happy.

AGNES. But not you?

MERRITT. Not me. . . .

AGNES. How do you figure that out?

MERRITT. You've got no soul—

AGNES. Neither have you, you old codfish, that's why we're so well suited.

MERRITT. Maybe I want a soul.

AGNES. Good Grief, are you getting mushy on someone else?

MERRITT. I don't know—

AGNES. Oh—but you don't see anything wrong in going on the way we are?

MERRITT. Why not? What's a little sex among friends?

AGNES. It's fair enough . . . but it's not very romantic.

MERRITT. Your marriage suggestion isn't very romantic either.

AGNES. No, but you see, I want either one thing or the other—one side ' me wants security an' comfort—I've always figured I'd marry somebody dull, rich and kind—

MERRITT. And I'm the type?

AGNES. Yes, you're that and more—you're a great pal. I suppose that's all you can ask for—no use looking for anything better.

MERRITT. Better?

AGNES. It's no good chasing after something mad and wonderful that doesn't exist—men are all soft-brained mahogany nunnies, like you—aren't there any romantic people in the world?

MERRITT. Try Spain.

AGNES. People who can squeeze a girl breathless, and go mad with adoration!

MERRITT. Find some young kid if you want that.

AGNES. I don't like 'em young.

MERRITT. Is that so? Well you won't make a dream daddy out of me . . . I advertise every preparation that goes to make you wonderful—

AGNES. Then you admit I am?

MERRITT. You do a good job on your carcass, it's the way you fix it up that makes men go crazy—if they're a little cracked to start with! I'm still sane and I'm busy, so that's that. [*He leads her towards door right*] Go around to Giovanni's and get a Tom Collins, I'll be over as soon as I get through.

AGNES. Half an hour?

MERRITT. Maybe less, go on now.

AGNES. All right, but I don't mind telling you you're a pig.

MERRITT. Thanks, why?

AGNES. Just your nature . . . nothing gets you, talk about soul, my foot! You're just a nice good-natured pig doing a big business in slops.

[MERRITT opens door right, bows to her politely]

MERRITT. Just for that I'll see you to the elevator!

AGNES [Laughing as they exit right]. And the check? Don't keep me waiting more than half an hour, Ray; I'm likely to get tight.

[They are off scene right, leaving door open Outside the windows, the twilight has deepened to grey. The lamp on desk left makes half the room bright, the rest in partial shadow]

JEFFERY [Entering room right]. Now I'll see him or bust.

SARAH [Following JEFFERY into the room]. I presume he's ready for you now, Mr. Halliburton.

JEFFERY. If I had women wasting my time in business hours, I'd be fired.

SARAH. No doubt.

[SOL enters right]

SOL. I seen him taking that Jane to the elevator. What's the chances a' getting in now, Sarah?

[She shrugs non-committally]

JEFFERY. You'll have to wait, I have an important conference with Mr. Merritt—

SOL. It's up to him to tell me whether I wait or not, not you!

JEFFERY. Are you going to start this again, Ginsberg?

SOL. That's up to you.

JEFFERY. I don't like to be talked to in that tone of voice, and I don't like to be threatened— [SARAH looks on very worried] I'm willing to drop the matter if you are—if not. . . .

SOL. If not, what?

JEFFERY. If not, you can go straight to hell—

[SOL suddenly walks up to JEFFERY in a furious temper, seizes his necktie and pulls him violently to his feet by it]

SOL. You little college shrimp—I could shake the stuffings out of you with one hand.

[JEFFERY starts to shake himself loose, pounding SOL's side with his fist.

MERRITT enters briskly right]

MERRITT. What the hell is this? [SOL releases JEFFERY] This isn't Madison Square Garden—what's the idea?

JEFFERY [Arranging himself]. This tough guy threatened to shake the stuffings out of me.

MERRITT. Did you indeed? Why?

SOL. Just to see the sawdust fly!

MERRITT [Looks SOL over sharply, turns]. Get out!

SOL. I'm on my way—you and your high hat fraternity brothers from Yale are all of a piece to me, Mr. Merritt. You don't want any one around here with brains enough to stand on their own feet—you got a lot of saps in this office that don't know their jobs—all they know is how to go down on their

knees and pray every time you look at them—I don't like the place, I don't like the way it's run and I don't think so much of you.

MERRITT. You're fired.

SOL. You can't fire me, I've quit.

MERRITT. Be out of the place in ten minutes. [SOL turns on his heel and exits right. MERRITT turns to SARAH] Make out a slip to the cashier to send him his pay to five o'clock this afternoon. [SARAH nods and exits] Sit down, Jeffery.

JEFFERY [Sitting]. Well done, Mr. Merritt.

MERRITT. Don't be so cocky—I imagine it was your fault as well as his— [He chuckles] I rather like his nerve.

JEFFERY [Holds out the yellow sheets of copy that have been lying on the desk]. Have you had time to look this over?

MERRITT. No . . . [He glances at the sheets] I'll tell you one thing at first glance—the types you indicate simply aren't practical—they won't fit with the layout of the page.

JEFFERY. I tried to get something novel, use imagination—

MERRITT. What do you think you're doing? Writing a story for the Yale monthly?

[He tosses the sheets on the desk disgustedly]

JEFFERY. You're not fair; I've given deep thought to this Glamour Cream proposition and you don't take the trouble to read it—

MERRITT. No, and there's a hundred million people just like me! No woman's going to plow through this essay—it would have to be set up in midget type to squeeze it on the page—you use three bad adjectives instead of one good one— [Presses a key on the dictaphone] No answer, Dennis has gone home for the day.

[He rings the buzzer under his desk]

JEFFERY. You don't have to hand it over to Dennis; I'll sweat blood to get this right.

MERRITT. Your blood won't sell Glamour Cream and neither will your goddamn copy—what's the deadline on this?

JEFFERY. It ought to go tonight, it can be taken by special messenger at nine o'clock tomorrow morning.

[SARAH enters right, notebook in hand]

MERRITT. See if you can get Dennis at his house—if he's not there, leave word he's to come to the office any hour he gets in. [She nods and exits] Dennis and I will have to spend the night dishing up this stuff. . . . [JEFFERY starts to speak, MERRITT stops him with a wave of his hand] That's all, Jeffery. . . .

JEFFERY. You're not fair, Mr. Merritt.

MERRITT. I'm so fair that I'm giving you another chance. Go out and get drunk, maybe that'll make you forget you're a bright young man.

JEFFERY. All right, sir.

[He exits. SARAH enters right]

SARAH. Mr. Dennis won't be home till eleven; they're trying to trace him, but they don't know where he is.

MERRITT. Christ alive, I'd like to kill that sap.

SARAH. Which one?

MERRITT. Halliburton.

SARAH. Yes sir, Ginsberg felt the same way.

MERRITT. Don't kid me, Miss Glassman, I'm in no mood for it. [*She says nothing, he starts to look at the Glamour Cream copy, but he can't keep his mind on it. He mutters between his teeth*] Am I running a business or a nut-house? [*Throwing the copy on the desk*] I'd better get some dinner and some drinks before I tackle this. Can you work tonight?

SARAH. Of course.

MERRITT [*Rises*]. Want to dine with me?

SARAH. No. . . .

MERRITT. What's the matter? Feeling bad because your boy-friend spilled the beans?

SARAH. Yes, I wanted to speak to you about that.

MERRITT. Don't worry, I don't hold it against *you*.

SARAH. If you're really as clever as I think you are, you wouldn't hold it against *him*.

MERRITT. What!

SARAH. Of course he had no right to fly off the handle the way he did, but what does that matter if he's got brains?

MERRITT. I don't want lunatics around this office, Miss Glassman . . . I want sane people that work hard and keep their mouths shut.

SARAH. He's worked like a dog over those statistics—he's been here every night, that's why he's in such a nervous state.

MERRITT. Oh . . . On your account, Miss Glassman, I'll take him round to my club for dinner.

SARAH. Not quite that—

MERRITT. Maybe it would be enough if I petted him and gave him a lollipop.

SARAH. If you should take him back now, he'd be tied to you for life.

MERRITT. Thanks, I'd rather have him tied some other place. . . .

SARAH. He's got imagination and he knows a lot about business—he's studied everything about it.

MERRITT. Is it an affair, you and him?

SARAH. Not how you mean. It's something quite different.

MERRITT. Spiritual? Well, let's have another look at this very spiritual young man. [*Picks up phone on desk*] Hello, Beulah, has Ginsberg left yet? Oh, send him to my office.

SARAH. You're quite nice, Mr. Merritt.

MERRITT. I'll give him a chance to apologize.

SARAH. If you let him go you're missing a chance to get a first rate man and get him cheap. Besides it would amuse you!

MERRITT. I don't want to play God, Miss Glassman, especially to a kid from the Ghetto, who seems to hate me poisonously. [*A knock is heard on door right*] That sounds humble, at any rate.

[*SARAH hurries to the door and opens it; SOL enters sullen and worried*]

MERRITT. Come in, Ginsberg, have you anything to say for yourself?

[*He sits at his desk*]

SOL. Yes, I have . . .

MERRITT. Out with it.

SOL. What I said was true, but I was a fool to say it.

MERRITT. That's not an apology.

SOL. I was dead wrong to lose my temper; I . . . well, in a way I'm sorry; what I think is nobody's business but my own and I was a fool to say what I did.

[*He turns to go*]

MERRITT. Wait a minute. That's all, Miss Glassman. Sit down, Ginsberg.

[*SOL sits uneasily; SARAH takes a nervous look from the door right and exits*]
To admit one's a fool is the beginning of success.

SOL. If you wanna give me a success talk, I suppose I've gotta listen.

MERRITT. Hold on to yourself, kid . . . the reason you're so ready to blow up is that you're absolutely lacking in self-confidence. You have guts enough to give me a good drubbing down, but you haven't got guts enough to sit here and talk it over . . .

SOL. What do you expect me to do, put my feet on the desk an' take a fistful of cigars?

MERRITT [*Shoving the silver cigar container towards him*]. I beg your pardon, have a cigar.

SOL [*Taking one, gingerly*]. Say, what are you trying to do?

MERRITT. Conducting a little experiment in human values!

SOL. You're a great joshier, Mr. Merritt.

MERRITT. Yes, that's one of my many faults . . . now keep your shirt on and tell me what's wrong?

SOL. It's just that we're all so afraid of you here—an' you sit there kidding us along. I'm as good as you are an' it makes me sore bein' scared green.

MERRITT. I've received a very high recommendation of you.

SOL. From who? I don't know anybody.

MERRITT. Miss Glassman. She says you're a square peg in a round hole.

SOL. If that's a dirty crack, it's way over my head.

MERRITT. I like your independence—I think you and I might reach some sort of understanding.

SOL. Huh . . . [*He indicates the cigar in his hand*] Have one yourself, this hasheesh is elegant.

MERRITT. Let's get down to cases, what's your objection to your present work?

SOL. It's dry—I ain't cut out for drawing up figures an' makin' lines on a

chart—the first month I liked it, 'cause it gives me a picture a' the way the wheels go round . . .

MERRITT. You think you know it all now?

SOL. Maybe!

MERRITT. Have you read any of our copy?

SOL. All of it; I went over all the stuff for the last two years in the files.

MERRITT. What do you think of it?

SOL. Rotten.

MERRITT. Could you do better?

SOL. If I couldn't I'd hop out of this window.

MERRITT. Any other suggestions?

SOL. Yeh . . . you're wastin' dough by the ton . . . you could save money in every department by usin' a little common sense.

MERRITT. If you have any concrete suggestions, make a memorandum of them; make it detailed and concise; have it on my desk in the morning.

SOL. I don't know whether I'll be here in the morning.

MERRITT. Suppose you found yourself in a congenial job, with a private office, and a secretary, and an assured future.

SOL. I'd take it.

MERRITT. That's nice of you. There's something about you that puzzles me, Ginsberg—you're not frank—you're bitter as gall—

SOL. You think so.

MERRITT. What's in the back of your head, Ginsberg?

SOL. I got brains both in the back an' the front, Mr. Merritt.

MERRITT. That's not an answer.

SOL. I'll give you an answer—since I was fifteen I been readin' an studyin' . . . I'm a radical.

MERRITT. Good, so am I.

SOL. You don't know the meanin' of the word.

MERRITT. Think the times are out of joint, do you?

SOL. I know it.

MERRITT. Go on.

SOL. The way I figure it out, all this Capitalist graft is gonna bust up sooner or later.

MERRITT. No doubt . . . what are you going to do in the meantime?

SOL. That's what worries me.

MERRITT. All right, my boy, I don't care whether you're a radical or a democrat—but I advise you to be alive; don't worry about dead issues.

SOL. The bunch I know don't think it's a dead issue.

MERRITT. Your opinions are of no consequence to me—in fact I think they're a joke.

SOL. You would, it's all a joke to you.

MERRITT. Go ahead, get looking higher, you'll think it's a joke too—then maybe you'll get almost rich and you'll think everything's a joke.

SOL. If you wanna make me rich, Mr. Merritt, hop to it, see if I care.

MERRITT. I'll give you a trial at fifty a week. Do you appreciate that?

SOL. No, I think you're gettin' the best of it.

MERRITT. Oh, you're doing *me* a favor?

SOL. [*Nods*]. When do I begin?

MERRITT. Right now. [*He picks up the Glamour Cream copy*] Just give me your reaction to this copy! [*He reads*] Glamour Cream, the medical skin food, put it on at night, it penetrates the cells of the skin, works while you sleep.

SOL. Sounds like somethin' for bedbugs.

MERRITT. I agree with you, that's the wrong sales approach. I suppose you're familiar with the product—the latest and most expensive skin rejuvenator.

SOL. Sure I know about it.

MERRITT. It contains the glandular fluid of genuine alligators!

SOL. I wouldn't lay that on too thick in the copy—no dame wants to look like an alligator!

MERRITT. I believe in the stuff—I believe it can be a knockout in the luxury trade—

SOL. It's a tough thing to put over at that price.

MERRITT. Twenty-eight dollars a jar.

SOL. You gotta put this stuff in a class with platinum and radium—

MERRITT. Can you do it?

SOL. God, I'll try—

MERRITT. Sit down at my desk, make a rough set-up of your ideas—I'll be back in an hour or two.

SOL. O.K.

[*He sits at MERRITT's desk. SARAH enters right*]

SARAH. Mr. Dennis is on the wire—they reached him where he was dining.

MERRITT. Tell him to keep in touch with the office. You better get a bite to eat, Miss Glassman. I'll be back at nine. [*SARAH exits right*] I can see you got a great gift for words, Ginsberg, you fool yourself with 'em—for the first time in your life, you're using words to fool other people.

[*He exits left front. SARAH has returned right. She looks at SOL excitedly*]

SARAH. I'm glad, Sol; I knew it would happen.

SOL. Fifty a week . . . to start . . .

SARAH. You see, you were wrong about him—

SOL. Don't be a fool, I haven't changed my mind about him—but I see my way—I can see dollar bills bein' thrown around like confetti—

SARAH. I'll go over to the automat and bring you back some sandwiches.

SOL. Bring back a pint a' coffee, too.

[*She starts to go, turns back and looks at SOL, hesitatingly*]

SARAH. Sol . . . I want you to kiss me before I go—

SOL. Cut it out, there's a time for everything—

SARAH. Sol . . .

SOL. Get away—just 'cause I'm sittin' at his desk you don't have to treat me like you do him.

SARAH. If you believe that, I'm going to quit tonight.

SOL. No, you're not; why should you quit when everything's breaking so pretty? Sell your personality . . . me too! Don't think you're putting anything over on me—I'm here 'cause he's nuts about you . . . I don't care . . . nuthin' matters but get your hands on the cash . . . personalities for sale cheap!

SARAH. Do you love me, Sol?

SOL. Go on, I'll write you a letter about it.

SARAH. Stop talking like you were possessed with the Devil, and listen to me a minute.

SOL. I'm busy; I'm sold to the devil; I'm writin' copy—

SARAH. I'm scared, that's all . . . where it may lead if you fall for it like this.

SOL. Stuffed pockets an' a white shirt with a diamond stickpin . . . God, that's a long way off, there's no need for you to look mushy about it.

SARAH. We must hold onto each other, Sol, I need you . . . now more'n ever . . . you need me . . . we're in danger . . .

SOL. Go way, you're makin' it up.

SARAH. Then you don't love me?

SOL. I dunno . . . love's not bread and butter, it's champagne, fine for them that can afford it.

SARAH. Two people can't go on the way we are, wantin' each other an' stayin' apart . . .

SOL. We've done it so far—

SARAH. What keeps us apart, huh? What makes us hurt each other all the time?

SOL. I do . . . me. Oh, I'm sick a' the gab, gab about love, gab about social injustice—maybe this here job is a way a' gettin' down to brass tacks.

SARAH. And I? Where do I fit in?

SOL. Maybe you do an' maybe you don't—

SARAH. But you told me I was the only girl—

SOL. You're the only girl I seen; there's a lot of men in the world an' I only seen a few.

SARAH. Your pride is something terrible, Sol.

SOL. You don't know the half of it, so don't come crawlin' to me sayin' love . . . I take what I want, I make up my mind—when I want you I tell you, see . . .

SARAH [*Turns sadly to door right*]. All right . . . I'll bring you coffee and sandwiches.

[*She exits quickly*]

SOL [*Shouts after her violently*]. You got me in such a state I can't work, damn you! [*SARAH has gone. SOL walks around the room excitedly, mutters to himself*] Just when I need a clear head she goes crazy on me— [*He is*

trembling with feeling. He stops short center and mutters with a grim smile as if he were addressing an invisible audience] Workers of the world, Unite, you got nothin' to lose but your chains—an' all you got to gain is bologney! [*He laughs shortly, strides back to desk and sits down. He takes a fresh cigar, lights it, and immerses himself in the copy on the desk, starting to make notes, etc.* AGNES enters quietly right. He doesn't see her. She hesitates right, looking at the boy sitting earnestly at the desk in the lamp-light. She approaches the desk, stands looking down at him, attracted and interested. SOL raises his head, stares at her. For a second they look at one another speechless] Oh . . . I thought I smelled perfume?

[AGNES laughs]

AGNES. Sorry to interrupt anybody that looks so busy.

SOL [*Still staring at her, taps with a pencil on the top of the desk, making a rhythmic ticking*]. That's all right.

AGNES. Thank you . . . do you know where Mr. Merritt is?

SOL. No, he might be in any one of forty thousand speakeasies.

AGNES. First time I ever heard anyone tell the truth in this office. How long ago did he leave?

SOL. Ten minutes.

AGNES [*Glances at her watch*]. Just as I thought—he stood me up—I was waiting in one place and he went somewhere else.

SOL. He knows a lot a' places.

AGNES. Can I wait?

SOL. Can I stop you?

AGNES. Would you mind telling me who you are?

SOL. I don't know—

AGNES. You don't know?

SOL. No, sometimes I'm me an' other times I'm a couple of other fellers.

AGNES. You say such odd things—

SOL. I ain't much of a social light, Miss Carter.

AGNES. Oh, you know who I am?

SOL. Did you think anybody around this office didn't know who you are, Miss Carter?

AGNES. Oh, I never thought of that; I suppose they do talk.

SOL. Talk! If you'd hear some of it, it would burn your ears off.

AGNES. My ears don't burn easily . . . I've never seen you; what's your job around here?

SOL. Well, I been a kind a' combination office boy, statistician an' boot-black—maybe you'd care for a shine?

AGNES. What are you doing in Mr. Merritt's office?

SOL. Writin' a revolutionary manifesto.

AGNES. What?

SOL. Sure! Calling on the Russian peasants to smear their tractors with Glamour Cream at twenty-eight bucks an ounce.

AGNES. If that's the case, I'll wait outside.

SOL. If it's all the same to you, stick around a minute.

AGNES. Why?

SOL. I was standin' within a foot of you when Merritt showed you out this afternoon—

AGNES. I didn't notice.

SOL. I did—I mean, the perfume.

AGNES [*Sitting on the desk carelessly*]. Oh . . . the perfume went to your head?

SOL. I'm glad a' the chance to get a whiff a' that stuff.

AGNES. So you liked me?

SOL. I dunno, I ain't had time to dislike you, but that lavender water sure gets my nanny.

AGNES [*Handing him her handkerchief*]. Have a good whiff!

SOL [*Smells the handkerchief rather suspiciously*]. What do you call it?

AGNES. Fievre d'Amour.

SOL. How much does it cost?

AGNES. I haven't the remotest idea.

SOL. Do you use it all over you?

AGNES. Not exactly . . . I use other things.

SOL. I can just see you in a hot bath of this amour stuff—

AGNES. That's indecent.

SOL [*Nods*]. I heard worse.

[*They stare at each other. A very definite feeling of contact between them. AGNES gets down from the desk. This is a little more than she bargained for. She turns to him, looking across the desk, rather defensively*]

AGNES. Tell me worse! Well . . .?

SOL [*As if speaking to himself instead of to her*]. I got you now . . . I see you . . .

AGNES. In that bath? [*He nods*] You don't waste any time, do you?

SOL. I'm not wastin' time—I was sittin' here tryin' to think up catchwords for the luxury trade—tryin' to tell dolls about some magic grease they rub on themselves to turn 'em to gold—an' suddenly I look up an' you're standin' there.

AGNES. In all my glory.

SOL. Yeh . . . shining like a light . . . rubbed with magic grease to make you shine.

AGNES. I'm not shiny.

SOL. I mean glamour. See, this is beauty they get for twenty-eight dollars a pot; you're a pot a' that, see! You ain't much, but I never seen another girl like you that was rich just standin' in her skin like you . . . it's the thing that makes poets cuckoo!

AGNES. Go on, you're cuckoo yourself!

SOL. If I could get you on paper I'd have the luxury trade in a nut-shell.

AGNES. What are you up to? What's the big idea?

SOL. I'm writin' copy; you're doin' it for me, 'cause you're it, see!

AGNES. No, I don't; is this a new gag?

SOL. You should worry about what it means . . . any words will do: shine, sheen, sheer, shock a' your body, you stepped out of a little pot of gold, out of a genuine Grecian urn that contains the vitality that made the Greeks famous, any woman can help herself to Greek Vitality for twenty-eight dollars, make herself like Venus standin' before me, Venus risen out of the sea of Amour, which means love in French.

AGNES. I guess you're a poet, but you got me in a fog.

SOL. When I seen you I seen the whole game . . . the game a' women an' the things they buy . . . oh, you're too dumb to get the idea.

AGNES. What's your name?

SOL. Sol Ginsberg.

AGNES. You're writing that for him?

SOL. For Merritt, yes.

AGNES. It doesn't matter whether it's good or bad, I'll make him push you along. He'll do anything I say. I'll tell him you're clever. God knows you're crazy enough to be terribly clever.

SOL. Suppose I tell you what I think a' you?

AGNES. You have, you told me I was Venus.

SOL. Sure. D'you know what I think a' Venus? Beauty? Bah, what's beauty? Don't I know you're a rotter? Sure I do . . . You're a piece a' pink fluff for the luxury trade—what's more . . . you're a parasite, a slave, a white slave an' blood sister to a street walker.

AGNES. You're out of luck from now on, Ginsberg—

SOL. You're sore, 'cause I tell you what's what.

AGNES. No . . . I kind of want you . . .

SOL. For a lover, you mean . . . is that what you mean, huh?

AGNES. No, just to crack the whip over you, any man that's so mad must be easy to get. [*He still holds her handkerchief, crushing it and tearing it in his hands*] Give me my handkerchief.

SOL. No, I want it.

AGNES. I need it.

SOL. If I had a million dollars I'd buy you, 'cause your skin's all gold—

AGNES. You wouldn't get me, so that's that.

SOL. Wanna bet?

AGNES. Get the million first, then I'll bet.

SOL. I will . . .

AGNES. Wild, aren't you . . . crazy? You'd take me now and smash me . . . wouldn't you, with one hand? You'll be sorry you ever called me names . . . I'll crack the whip . . .

ACT TWO

THE same scene.

A morning in the Fall, 1930.
The office is unchanged in all essentials. Bright sunlight shines outside the big windows rear, mellowing the room. It is one of those lucid Autumn days, the sky as clear as crystal.

The objects on the table are somewhat different, a jar of Glamour Cream among them.

SARAH, *wearing the same type of simple office dress as in Act I, sits at the desk, left center, telephone in hand.*

SARAH [*At telephone, taking notes on pad in front of her*]. Atlas Motors opened at ten and three-quarters, last sale nine and seven-eighths . . . a block of ten thousand shares . . . What about Warner Drug Products? . . . Yes . . . Universal Motors, thirty-eight and one-half; Colby Manufacturing seven—I'll tell him.

[*While SARAH has been talking, SOL has entered right, and listens to what she says. He is an altogether different person from the uncouth boy of the previous act. He is a brisk, self-possessed young business man, wearing a conservatively snappy blue suit*]

SOL [*As SARAH rings off*]. Not so good!

SARAH. What?

SOL. The market . . . a lot of jackasses thought we hit the bottom last summer—I knew better . . .

SARAH. You know everything, don't you?

SOL. Not quite—where's R-M?

SARAH. Mr. Merritt hasn't come down yet.

SOL [*Picks up slip of paper which SARAH has placed in center of desk*]. What a headache he'll have when he sees these figures—only ten-thirty and Atlas Motors is down a point— [SARAH *is silent*] Lost quite heavily these last two months, hasn't he? [SARAH *nods*] How much do you figure he's dropped?

SARAH. Well, he's had to put up more collateral every day and it's been quite a drain on him—but he's able to hold on—

SOL. I wonder how long . . .

SARAH. What?

SOL. How about Turner?

SARAH. I think he's borrowed from Mr. Merritt—

SOL. Huh! They must be in a stew—is that right?

SARAH. Sol . . . I'm clever enough to know when I'm being pumped—

SOL. Sure, I like to get the low-down, Sarah; it helps me to figure things out—

SARAH. Figure out what?

SOL. Oh, just what they're doing and how they do it.

SARAH. Have you been losing in the market?

SOL. Not me—I don't take their dumb tips—I been selling short and making money—

[DINAH enters right with papers]

DINAH [*As she crosses*]. From Mr. Fisher—he says this is urgent, Miss Glassman—

SARAH. Thank you.

SOL [*Facing DINAH as she turns back toward right*]. Tell me, Dinah, how do you like working on the statistics with Fisher?

DINAH. I like it, Mr. Ginsberg. Mr. Fisher's just lovely to me.

SOL. Sure, Fisher's a good old scout—I had your job once myself.

DINAH. Yes, sir . . .

[DINAH exits]

SOL. When do you expect R-M?

SARAH. Any minute, he has an appointment with Mr. Sonnenberg at eleven-thirty.

SOL. Sonnenberg? He's coming here? [SARAH nods] Is that so? Got any idea what it's about?

SARAH. Oh, the usual things, I suppose, plans for the business! [*As SOL bangs the little bronze statue of a naked woman down on the desk hard*]—what are you so nervous about?

SOL. I got lots on my mind . . . [*He sits on desk*] What if I was your boss instead of Merritt? How would you like that?

SARAH. What?

SOL. Things move fast in this world—but I guess you wouldn't care . . . one man is just like another to you . . . you'd take my dictation, huh? With love and kisses?

SARAH. I wish you wouldn't say things like that.

SOL. Don't kid me, baby, I got eyes in my head; when a guy looks at a woman like he does at you, it's a cinch he knows every curve of her body—

SARAH. My God, what a mind you've got.

SOL. Yes, I'm smart—

SARAH. Just because a man looks at a woman, you think they must be having an affair—is that your theory?

SOL. Certainly—that's how men and women are. I don't blame you, Sarah—enjoy yourself—have a dozen men at once—so long as I am not one of the lucky fellers, I don't care—

SARAH. Then why do you keep asking me questions?

SOL. I'm just joshing you—we're still friends, Sarah—am I right?

SARAH. I don't know—you've changed—

SOL. Both of us! We're getting along—from rags to riches, huh?

SARAH. I don't know about the riches—

SOL. Oh, the salary I get is nothing—it's the market that counts, the sweet

words I read on the tape—you're a careful girl, Sarah, you must have quite a pile put away yourself . . . [*She nods her head*] Maybe I'd do you a favor, Sarah—how would you like to triple your money? Get four times, five times what you put in?

SARAH. I'd like that.

SOL. Wait 'till I get something I'm working on now straightened out—I'll be in a position to do something for you in a big way.

SARAH. What are you planning?

SOL. Never mind . . .

SARAH. Sol, I'm afraid for you, afraid you're riding for a fall.

SOL. What are you always criticising me for? Anybody would think it 'was a crime for a guy to make good—

SARAH. No, it's fine if that's what you want.

SOL. What do you think I want?

SARAH. I wish I knew and I wish I could give it to you.

SOL. I'll get what I want without you—

SARAH. So it seems—

SOL. Watch my dust—say, it gives me a kick to look back at the radical type we used to fall for—that stuff's a religion for misfits—Huh! I'm no misfit, I know where I belong—

SARAH. That sounds like a Rotary club speech—

SOL. That's bunk too—most everything's bunk when you know your way round—the trick is, to use the bunk without being taken in—

SARAH. Why are you so bitter about it?

SOL. Me bitter! I'm laughing—looking back at a raw kid that got drunk on words he found in books—God! it seems like a million miles away—[*SARAH nods*] I haven't been near the East Side in a year, not since I went to my brother's funeral—there's the whole thing in a nutshell—two boys come out of the Ghetto, one gets killed in a gang fight, and the other . . .

SARAH. What about the other? I can't see him very clearly, Sol—

SOL. You're looking back—you should look ahead like me—

SARAH. Sol . . . now and then, the way you smile or something, I see you like you used to be! Where's the boy I used to know, named Sol Ginsberg—

SOL. That kid is dead. . . . Bury the past, put it in the ground and throw dirt on it—

[*He stops short as TURNER enters right*]

TURNER. Good morning, Miss Glassman . . . hello, Sol . . . where's the boss?

SARAH. He's sure to be here soon, Mr. Turner; will you wait?

TURNER [*Nods*]. Yes, I have some information for him.

SOL. Got some information, have you? You don't look very happy about it.

TURNER. Don't I?

[*SARAH exits right—TURNER stops and stares at model of Atlas factory left*]

SOL. You're worried about Atlas Motors?

TURNER. What makes you think so?

SOL. The way you look at that model of the factory . . . [*Joining him at the model*] It's a monument to bad business judgment—not a wheel in that dump will ever turn again.

TURNER. Got any Atlas stock yourself?

SOL. I'm on the short side and I intend to stay there.

TURNER. You'll be squeezed till you scream one of these days.

SOL. It takes a lot of squeezing to make me scream.

[*A key has turned in door front left. MERRITT enters wearing overcoat, carrying hat and stick*]

MERRITT. Good morning.

SOL. We were just discussing the market, Mr. Merritt.

MERRITT [*Glances at papers on desk*]. What about it?

TURNER. Sol's very pessimistic about it.

MERRITT. Nonsense, a rise is overdue—

SOL. Don't you believe it—I studied the charts—when those little black lines start going down, it takes more than optimism to stop 'em—

TURNER. As usual, he's sure that he's right and everyone else in the world is wrong—

SOL. Your head's made of marble, Mark; you should have it polished—

TURNER. I resent that—

MERRITT. Don't mind him, Mark— [*He rings buzzer under desk*] You're clever, Sol, but if you were as smart as you think you are, you should be taken around the country in a tent and exhibited.

[*SARAH enters right, notebook in hand*]

SOL. I hope I'd rate something better than a tent.

MERRITT [*To SARAH*]. Good morning, Miss Glassman—what's on deck?

SARAH. Golden and Company want you to call them immediately. [*Indicating papers on desk*] Mr. Fisher said these reports were urgent . . . Mr. Sonnenberg will be here at 11.30.

MERRITT [*Nods, comparing his watch with clock on table*]. Get me Golden and Company, I want to speak to Mr. Fletcher.

SARAH [*Picks up phone*]. A line, please.

[*She proceeds to dial*]

MERRITT. Something you wanted to see me about, Sol?

SOL. Yes, I got inside dope that the Starkeley agency is going bankrupt—I want your permission to line up some of their accounts.

MERRITT. Starkeley going on the rocks? In these days you don't know whose turn is going to be next!

SARAH [*On phone*]. Mr. Fletcher, please . . .

[*She hands phone to MERRITT*]

MERRITT. Hello, Nick, what's the latest on Atlas? Nine and one-eighth—what's the big idea? Rumors—? Sure, I heard rumors myself . . . Warner Drug Products—acutely weak, huh! Yes, I'll send you a check by messenger—

sure, I understand, don't mention it, Nick— [*He rings off, turns to SARAH*] Make out a check to Golden and Company—twenty thousand—no, make it twenty-five thousand—better be on the safe side—

SARAH. Yes, sir . . . and Mr. Halliburton is waiting to see you.

MERRITT. I'll get rid of Halliburton right now.

[*SARAH nods and exits right*]

SOL. How about it, R-M? Can I start negotiating for the accounts of the Starkeley agency?

MERRITT. No, I'm sorry they're in trouble, but it wouldn't be square to go after their people until they actually quit.

SOL. You're missing a chance to make some money—

MERRITT. I don't do business that way—

TURNER. Can I see you for a minute, Raymond?

MERRITT. Sure you can, Mark; wait a minute in Miss Glassman's office.

[*JEFFERY HALLIBURTON appears right. TURNER and SOL meet him as they start to exit right*]

TURNER. Hello, Jeff, I hear you're going to have a bang-up society wedding.

SOL. Going to invite the whole staff, Jeff?

JEFFERY. Why not?

[*SOL and TURNER exit. JEFFERY shuts the door right*]

Well, Mr. Merritt, have you thought it over?

MERRITT. Yes, I have.

[*He turns and sits at desk*]

JEFFERY. Don't keep me in suspense.

MERRITT. You're through, Jeff . . . I'll give you a letter saying your connection with this firm has been uniformly satisfactory—

JEFFERY. Thanks—

MERRITT. For Christ's sake, don't look so broken up—you'll find another berth right away.

JEFFERY. Sure, I've been looking around since you warned me last week.

MERRITT [*Coming around the desk*]. I want you to realize, my hand is being forced—we've held up very well in a bad year, but the bankers don't approve of our overhead.

JEFFERY. Sure . . . I don't want to sit around being charged to overhead.

MERRITT [*Offering his hand*]. I'll instruct the cashier to give you two weeks' salary, and I'll send you that letter this afternoon. [*They shake hands*] I wish you luck.

JEFFERY. Thanks, same to you.

[*He turns and exits right. MERRITT rings buzzer at desk. SARAH enters*]

SARAH. Here's the check.

MERRITT [*Signing it*]. Send it down by special messenger, attention to Mr. Fletcher. [*Sarah nods, turns away*] Wait a minute; come here, Miss Glassman. [*She turns back to desk*] Just want to take a good look at you . . . you know the most unpleasant part of my job is firing people—Halliburton—I kicked him out . . . nice kid but no character.

SARAH. That's a shame, but perhaps a few hard knocks will give him character.

MERRITT. You're a sentimentalist, Miss Glassman; hard knocks don't give people character, just make 'em mushy; the town's full of boys like Halliburton . . . Yale men, Harvard men, they play good golf and their clothes are always pressed, but they bum drinks in every speakeasy in town!

SARAH. It's a hard-boiled town, Mr. Merritt.

MERRITT. You said it. Maybe you'd join me on a desert island sometime, Miss Glassman?

SARAH. I hardly think so. [*She goes to door right. As she is about to exit, he calls briskly*] Tell Turner I'm ready for him. [*She nods and exits. TURNER enters*]

TURNER. The market's giving me the heebie-jeebies, R-M; what am I going to do?

MERRITT. The first thing you better do is calm down, Mark . . . are you sure your heebie-jeebies are due to the market or to a hangover?

TURNER. Both—

MERRITT. What a party last night, huh!

TURNER. I have trip hammers in my head . . .

MERRITT. Have a Bromo?

TURNER. I've had four . . . For God's sake, R-M, come out of the trance—I'm up to my neck—I'd have been wiped out last week if you hadn't carried me—

MERRITT. Let's not worry about it, Mark . . . you bought on my advice, and as long as I can protect myself, I'll protect you . . .

TURNER. Suppose it just goes on breaking, where's it going to end?

MERRITT. Hell, Mark, that's a philosophic question! Where's the world going to end?

TURNER. How can you be so damned flippant?

MERRITT. Stop tearing your hair, Mark. Want some Rye to clear your head?

TURNER. No, Felix downstairs will fix me up a morning glory.

[*Dictaphone buzzes. MERRITT answers it. SARAH's voice over dictaphone, "May Mr. Fisher see you for a moment?"*]

MERRITT. Sure— [*He rings off, rises*] I'll join you— [*Glancing at watch*] I just have time.

[*FISHER enters right. A thin grey man of about fifty, a typical office drudge, a pallid face, spare hair around a high forehead, timid eyes looking out from bushy eyebrows. He holds a telegram in his hands*]

FISHER. Excuse me, Mr. Merritt.

MERRITT. Well, Fisher?

FISHER. I just got a wire from the Blodgett Company asking for those reports from psychologists about the relation of perfume and . . . er . . . sex—

MERRITT. Send it if you've got it—

FISHER. It's on your desk, sir, I didn't like to forward it without your approval—

MERRITT. What the hell do I know about perfume and sex? Get it out special delivery and wire them it's on the way—

[*He picks up his hat, about to exit with* TURNER]

FISHER. Yes, sir; anything else, sir?

MERRITT. Not unless you feel a passionate desire for a morning glory—

FISHER. I . . . I don't care much for flowers, sir—

[*SARAH enters right*]

MERRITT. Back in fifteen minutes, Miss Glassman. [*She nods.* TURNER and MERRITT *exit left front*]

SARAH [*Turning back to door*]. All right, Dinah . . .

DINAH [*Entering right*]. Excuse me, Mr. Fisher, the man is there about the new filing cabinets.

[*SARAH picks up MERRITT's coat and cane and exits with them left rear*]

FISHER [*Starting for door right*]. I'll tell him what I want—

DINAH. If you put in many more files, I don't know how you'll have room for me.

FISHER. I couldn't get along without you, Miss McCabe.

[*FISHER exits right, leaving door open. SARAH returns from left*]

DINAH. I want to tell you something, Miss Glassman, guess what! He wants me to marry him!

SARAH. Who does?

DINAH. Mr. Fisher . . . he says he ain't been the same since his wife died!

SARAH. That's awfully nice . . .

DINAH. I gave him the horse laugh, Miss Glassman; I told him there was other fish in the sea. You should 'a seen his face work when I made that crack.

SARAH. I'll bet you do, just the same— [*SOL enters right*]

DINAH [*With her back to SOL, not having seen him enter, continues to SARAH*]. I ain't got an impulsive nature, Miss Glassman; I wouldn't marry him—

SOL. Marry who?

DINAH. Oh nobody, Mr. Ginsberg—

SOL. You better take what you can get, girlie—

DINAH. Oh, Mr. Ginsberg!

SOL [*To SARAH*]. I'll bet she's in love with me—

DINAH. Oh, Mr. Ginsberg, how can you say that, Mr. Ginsberg? [*She backs to door right, turns*] I guess you can come in, Miss, it's only Mr. Ginsberg. [*AGNES enters right, DINAH exits*]

AGNES. Only Mr. Ginsberg . . . I didn't come to see you but I'll have to make the best of it.

SOL. When is Mr. Sonnenberg expected, Miss Glassman?

SARAH. Eleven-thirty.

SOL [*Consulting his watch*]. Very well, Miss Glassman, I'll ring if I want you. [*SARAH nods and exits right*]

AGNES. I must say the way you order people around here—they don't think much of you, but you act like you thought you were God!

SOL. You come at a very bad time, I got lots on my mind.

AGNES. I didn't come to see you—I came to see Raymond.

SOL. You got nothing to see him about.

AGNES. Oh, haven't I?

SOL. Why are you here—answer me?

AGNES. If you're really so upset about it, I'll tell you why—I want to borrow money from him.

SOL. Damn you, you're not fair—

AGNES. What? I'm telling you exactly—

SOL. You want to make trouble for me—

AGNES. I should think the trouble would be for him!

SOL. Are you a woman or some kind of devil? You stick me with a knife right in the pride.

AGNES. I don't give a damn for your pride—

SOL. You told me it was all off, him and you?

AGNES. Of course it is—I don't lie to you—

SOL. How much are you asking him for?

AGNES. That depends on what mood he's in—one thousand, two thousand.

SOL. You expect me to believe a man will give you that and get nothing in return—

AGNES. You ought to know; you tried hard enough and what have you got?

SOL. Nothing . . .

AGNES. Then you better trust me at least—Raymond's an old friend. I go to him just the way I'd go to a bank—

SOL. A night and day bank. I'm not a fool; if Merritt hands you cash he has a reason—

AGNES. Friendship— [*SOL hoots derisively*] I don't see what you're so hot about—he happens to be a generous person.

SOL. I'm generous, why don't you come to me?

AGNES. That's silly. I couldn't ask you for anything on the money you're getting—

SOL. You wait—

AGNES. Besides, I don't want anything from you—you never give me things, and I never ask you—

SOL. I don't, don't I? How about that damn little pekinese?

AGNES. Oh, that doesn't count—

SOL. Don't be mad at me, Aggie . . . it just worries me the way you don't think of anything but getting things—crazy over things, little jewels, and step-ins and nicknacks and chiffons!

AGNES. That's all there is, there isn't any more! And do I get 'em? Not much—

SOL. So you go to other men and hold me off like some kind of insect buzzing around—

AGNES. I've been pretty nice to you. I don't see why you're always howling for more—

SOL. What's it got me? I get my arms around you once, I'd never let go

AGNES. Lay off, Sol, you make me feel like such a brute; you chase me like a pet dog asking for something, and I've got nothing to give you.

SOL. You got yourself!

AGNES. No, you want it too much—it's more fun to have you all in a fever wanting something that's just a joke to me—that's the kind of a cold potato I am. I told you the first time we crashed up against each other right in this office.

SOL. Some crash that was.

AGNES. And we've been going on crashing; every time I step out with you, it's a free for all. You scare me, honest; you're so romantic you get my nerves all raw.

SOL. Got no feelings, have you? A mechanical doll, huh? Well, there's some way I'll wind you up and make you go.

AGNES. If I'm only a doll, why are you ready to steal, crawl, lie . . . for me?

SOL. You're not even a person, you're a thing, the thing I want. What goes on in your empty little head?

AGNES. Nothing . . . less than you think. You think I got a plan about you? That's foolish. I'm just lazy, I don't want to be bothered—

SOL. Did you ever fall for anybody?

AGNES. Not since I was sixteen—

SOL. How about Merritt?

AGNES. I'm fond of him, always been fond of him—a good pal—but no more sex appeal than a Great Dane.

SOL. What about me, Aggie?

AGNES. Oh, lay off, can't you?

SOL. Suppose I got a million dollars—then you'll give in?

AGNES. You got the tenacity of a bulldog.

SOL. I'll give you stuff, jewels the size of an egg, stones that'll make you sweat to carry 'em on a hot day—

AGNES. It's not healthy the way you go on . . . you better cut it out.

SOL. Right now you got a tear in your eye. [*She sinks wearily into a chair right front*]

AGNES. I know it . . . I need a handkerchief.

[*From his pocket SOL carefully takes out a little, soiled, rumpled handkerchief*]

SOL. I got one, see . . . yours . . .

AGNES. Gee, you're a fool. I must say you don't keep it very nicely.

SOL. No, but it's perfumed . . . I put that Fievre d'Amour stuff on it. [*He crushes the little handkerchief to his lips*] God, Aggie, for two years I been true to you, my dream of you, and I had nothing—do you wonder I'm near crazy—

AGNES. Don't . . . don't . . . [*He is on his knees beside her, head against her breast*] Give me a handkerchief, you fool. [*He hands her his own handkerchief*]

SOL. Here, take this if you need it. See . . . you got a soft heart; why, you'd warm up to love . . . me telling you sweet things . . . would be like a fire warming you . . . sweet fire . . .

AGNES. It listens pretty, but it's all talk—

SOL. I'll give you the world for a present . . . oh, maybe not the whole world at once, but in time . . .

AGNES. I know how you feel—anything you can't get makes you sick and sour. I know how it is looking in shop windows—

SOL. I'll make it legal—

AGNES. What?

SOL. Suppose we get married right away—

AGNES. You've come to that, have you?

SOL. I'll make you wild with love . . . in time . . . [*Slowly as if he were just realizing it himself*] I got a capacity for love!

AGNES. Why do you do this to me? I'm no good, why should you marry a girl that's a . . . a . . . honest, Sol, sex is not so important as all that—

SOL. I am the judge—if you are as bad as you say yourself, money will buy you—

AGNES. You're wrong, it won't . . . not this time. I'm just the sort of a nut all the kale in the world won't buy—

SOL. Then there's another way to reach you, there's always a way.

AGNES. There is a way—but you're too dumb and selfish to know it—

[*A knock on door right. SOL and AGNES stand staring at each other as enemies. The knock is repeated and SARAH enters right, closing the door behind her*]

SARAH [*To SOL*]. Mr. Sonnenberg—

SOL. [*To SARAH*]. I'll see Mr. Sonnenberg, until Mr. Merritt gets back—
[*To AGNES*] Wait in my office, Aggie—promise you'll wait. [*AGNES exits right. SARAH stands hesitating*] Hurry up, don't keep him waiting— [*SARAH nods and opens door right*]

SARAH. Mr. Merritt will be back in a moment, Mr. Sonnenberg.

SONNENBERG [*Enters, consulting watch*]. Yes, I'm five minutes early—

SOL. Glad to see you, Mr. Sonnenberg. [*They shake hands. SARAH exits right*] How have you been since the other day?

SONNENBERG. Nicely, thanks—

SOL. What's up, Mr. Sonnenberg? How do we stand? When I heard you were meeting Merritt here today I figured things were coming to a head—

SONNENBERG [*Sitting*]. Precisely.

SOL. I tried to reach you on the phone half an hour ago, but you were tied up—

SONNENBERG. Yes . . . I saw no point in discussing the matter further with you—

SOL. You gave me encouragement the other day—

SONNENBERG. I in no way committed myself— I told you your proposition impressed me; in fact, the proposition is nothing short of formidable—

SOL. If you let me carry out my policies here, I'll double the profits of the business—

SONNENBERG. I admire your ego, Mr. Ginsberg, although I find you shockingly lacking in tact—

SOL. What good is tact?

SONNENBERG [*Amused*]. Tact has served me very well on occasions . . . look at it from my point of view: why should I trust you when you come to me with a scheme for betraying your own employer?

SOL. I'm not! [*Desperately anxious to justify himself, to show his own angle on the situation*] I simply got ideas, I got ambition. I've told Mr. Merritt my plans and he won't listen to me; he don't realize that times are different and things have got to be done differently—I got a right to go straight to you and tell you my plans: if they're good, they ought to be acted on!

SONNENBERG. Your plans are interesting.

SOL. Interesting? If you don't follow those plans, you're just throwing away our money!

SONNENBERG [*Raising one eyebrow*]. Our money?

SOL. I mean the firm . . . in tough times like these we got to use our wits!

SONNENBERG. And your wits led you to appeal to me behind your superior's back?

SOL. Anything I'm saying to you I'm ready to say right to Merritt's face, but he won't listen! I went to you and laid my cards on the table because I thought you'd understand what I was driving at. Only this morning I got a chance to get control of the accounts of a rival firm that's going bankrupt, I wangled it so we can get those accounts sewed up in a bag; Merritt wouldn't hear of it—

SONNENBERG. I dislike the word wangle!

SOL. I can't pick my words, business is business.

SONNENBERG. There are limits; one must look at the ethical side.

SOL. I don't get this stuff about ethics; you're the real power here, if I got money-making ideas, you ought to be glad to hear about 'em. All I want is for you to step in and enforce my views!

SONNENBERG. That's simple enough!

SOL. Then we're set?

SONNENBERG. You mean I'm set . . . you, if I may say so without offense, are sitting on some very sharp pins and needles.

SOL. What are you going to do? Don't keep me guessing?

SONNENBERG. We shall see!

SOL. If you just gimme a chance, I can make a showing, I can prove . . .

[MERRITT *enters front left*]

MERRITT. I hope I haven't kept you waiting, Mr. Sonnenberg—

SONNENBERG. Not at all. Mr. Ginsberg has been entertaining me admirably.

MERRITT. No doubt—Come in the library where we can be comfortable.

[*Indicates door rear left*]

SOL. Call me if you want me—

MERRITT. What?

SOL. Oh, nothing—

MERRITT. What is it, Sol? Anything you want to say?

SOL. Me? Not a thing . . . not at present . . .

SONNENBERG [*As he and MERRITT exit left*]. I won't keep you long, Mr. Merritt—

[SARAH *enters right*]

SARAH. Where's Mr. Merritt?

SOL. In there.

SARAH. What's the trouble?

SOL [*To himself, deeply disturbed*]. You'll know quick enough—God-damn it, they don't even give me a chance to come in and speak my piece—

SARAH. What are you mumbling about?

SOL. They're deciding it in there right now—what I worked for for two years—

SARAH. Do you mean you're trying to make trouble for Mr. Merritt?

SOL. If he's looking for trouble, he'll get plenty of it.

SARAH. It's too big for you—

SOL. Nothing's too big for me, nothing . . .

SARAH. You say so!

SOL. Oh you think I'm kidding, do you? I got Merritt right where I want him.

SARAH. Have you?

SOL. He's used this company's money to cover his margin in the market.

[SARAH *reacts to this with definite fear. She knows the charge is true, but is on the defensive—she must protect MERRITT*]

SARAH. You can't prove anything like that—

SOL [*Taking a paper from his pocket*]. Do you think I'd be fool enough to say it if I couldn't prove it? I got it down here in black and white—that's enough to satisfy a judge and jury—

SARAH. What is it?

SOL. That's a digest of the accounts—I been here every night studying the books, tracing every entry, checking every penny . . . it took work to get to the bottom of these accounts, but I did it—I got him! The money he sends down to his brokers comes out of this company's funds—

SARAH. If he's done that, he had a very good reason for it.

SOL. He had the same reason I got, to save his own skin—

SARAH. No one would believe—

SOL. If I sprung this on Sonnenberg—

SARAH. You can't, as a matter of loyalty—

SOL. You're full of pretty words—I haven't shown it, I never said a word about it to Sonnenberg—

SARAH. I'm glad, the only decent thing—

SOL. I wasn't being decent, I had a better use for it—

SARAH. I'll tell Mr. Merritt about it—

SOL. What do you suppose I'm telling you now for, except to have it get back to him as quick as possible—I know you—

SARAH. I know you; you wouldn't do a mean action—

SOL. If I get my back to the wall, I'll show 'em—

SARAH. It's not worth it; it's not a question of what Mr. Merritt has done—

SOL. All you're thinking about is him—

SARAH. I want you to be careful, for your own sake—

SOL. I won't lose everything I sweated for—

SARAH. You're all wrong—you don't see—

SOL. I'm going some place; anyone stands in my way I'll smash 'em—

SARAH. You mustn't—

SOL. I know what I'm after—

SARAH. No you don't—this isn't what you've worked for—

SOL. Go on—

SARAH. It's not you; it's horrible—stop and think; promise me—

SOL. How can I promise? I don't know how it's going to break!

[MERRITT *enters left rear*]

MERRITT [*Turning back in the doorway, evidently addressing SONNENBERG*]. No, I insist on settling this right now— [*He shuts the door*]

SOL. Want to see me?

MERRITT [*Icily*]. That's exactly what I want— [*SARAH looks from one to the other, exits right*]

SOL. I suppose he told you—

MERRITT. I hate to see a man I trusted plotting behind my back.

SOL. That's what you call it—I went to Sonnenberg with a gilt-edge plan for reorganizing here—I told you my ideas and you stepped all over them—I thought he'd have sense enough to see it.

MERRITT. I've believed in you and trusted you—

SOL. That's tripe—I've given you what I was paid for—

MERRITT. If you can't see what you're guilty of—

SOL. Go on, tell me—

MERRITT. Unethical conduct—

SOL. Shut up about ethics, I got no time for 'em—

MERRITT. I bear you no real grudge, but I can't employ a man I don't trust.

SOL. Just a minute—that's up to Sonnenberg—

MERRITT. He told me to use my own judgment—

SOL [*Bitterly*]. The double-crossing fool—to turn on one of his own race—

[*Leaning across the desk*] That ain't all: I haven't told Sonnenberg all I know about this business and the way it's run—

MERRITT [*Wearily*]. If you want to have this out with him and me, that's your privilege—

SOL. You're not afraid of anything I might say?

MERRITT [*Who is much moved and unhappy, flares up angrily*]. I've had enough of this— [*Shouting*] You're out. You're through—

SOL. All right, if you want to make it a fight—

MERRITT. You can't fight me—

SOL. I'll lick you yet—if I don't do it with my brains I'll do it with my hands—

MERRITT. You're showing yourself up—

SOL. I'll show you up.

MERRITT. Don't try that gangster stuff on me—

SOL. Gangster, huh!

MERRITT. Nothing else—

SOL [*Stops short, then speaks with deep feeling*]. Your talk about gangsters don't mean anything. My brother was a square guy and he was One-eyed Izzy that got his on Second Avenue—

MERRITT [*Looks at SOL with interest and amazement*]. Have you gone looney? What are you talking about?

SOL. This is a gangster's world and I'm out to beat it. The first bullet got Izzy's good eye and he staggered blind around the street; nobody on the East Side will forget that blind gunman for the two minutes before he fell. They buried him in a solid silver coffin with gold cupids, twenty grand, with twelve thousand worth of flowers—

MERRITT. Why do you tell me this?

SOL. I swore at the funeral—to get what he was after and to get it respectable. The gold and silver I'm after won't be on my coffin—

MERRITT [*Thinks a minute, then speaks coldly, with a certain thoughtful mockery in his voice*]. Tell that to Rufus Sonnenberg, if it will give you any pleasure—

[*SARAH enters right. She is quite distraught, nervous*]

SARAH. Mr. Merritt, I feel I must tell you something—it may be important—

MERRITT. Go in the library, Ginsberg, and if you know what's good for you, you better keep your temper!

SOL. Don't worry, I don't insult people with that much money! [*He exits*]

SARAH. Mr. Merritt, I must warn you.

MERRITT. What about?

SARAH. He's been telling me things, threats against you . . . he says he knows about your stock transactions, he says you've used the company's money—

MERRITT. How much does he know?

SARAH. He knows a great deal; he's been here at night studying the accounts, he has written proof—I tried to stop him and he wouldn't listen—

MERRITT. Oh, I begin to see, that's what he meant.

SARAH. It's my fault!

MERRITT. Oh, no . . . after all, the mistake is mine! [*Very gently, putting his hand on her arm*] Funny, Miss Glassman, the way circumstances push us into doing things we don't want to do, you and me both!

SARAH. How can he do it? How can he be so blind?

MERRITT. You're still worrying about him? [*She is silent*] For God's sake, forget him! [*He turns vigorously to the library*] We'll have a show-down if that's what he wants! [*He exits into the library. AGNES enters right*]

AGNES. I'm awfully sick of waiting, Miss Glassman.

SARAH. He's tied up; I think it will be some time, Miss Carter.

AGNES. Well, there's nobody here, so why shouldn't I stick around?

SARAH. I think it would be better if you waited in my office.

AGNES. Do you? [*She sits idly on the desk*] You know this business stuff doesn't impress me, Miss Glassman—

[*AGNES picks up papers on the desk, tearing them nervously, crumples a sheet in her hand. SARAH comes over, straightens out the crumpled paper, makes a neat pile of the sheets*]

SARAH. Excuse me, these might be valuable.

AGNES. I was just reading about this Glamour Cream that they advertise so much. Do you think it's any good?

SARAH. I guess it's all right, but it's a failure. They've lowered the price but they can't sell it.

AGNES. Did you ever try it?

SARAH. Yes, I tried a jar. It smells lovely.

AGNES. I think they're all fakes—it's so easy to fool women, because they're so anxious.

SARAH. That's what advertising goes on.

AGNES. I've tried all of 'em— [*Pause*] Guess I'm afraid of getting old—

SARAH. [*Obviously not meaning it*]. You, Miss Carter, how could anybody think of *you* being old?

AGNES [*Smiling*]. You mean where there's no thoughts, there's no wrinkles— Don't kid me, Miss Glassman, I know your opinion of me. Now take that mud they recommend—I smeared that on my face for weeks, but it's so messy and it makes you feel like such a fool—just think how embarrassed you'd be if a burglar should come in— [*SARAH laughs*] Well, I believe you've got to be prepared for everything.

SARAH. That's right.

AGNES. You never know—that's what I always say.

SARAH [*Has been standing looking down at her. She suddenly bursts out, almost screaming with feeling*]. How can he? God, how can he?—You're such a fool, that's all you are, how can he love you—how can he— [*Puts her hand over her mouth*]

AGNES [*A little breathless, her lips quivering a little as she smiles, but maintaining her poise*]. Well, I'm glad you said what you thought at last.

SARAH. I didn't mean to— [*She turns and exits right in helpless distress*]

AGNES [*Alone*]. Goddam it, I want to be a nun!

[*DINAH enters right with some papers in a basket*]

DINAH [*Over her shoulder, evidently addressing SARAH as she comes in*]. Yeh—I'll put 'em on his desk. [*As DINAH crosses to Merritt's desk, the dicta-phone buzzes—*] Guess I'd better take that call.

AGNES. Go ahead.

DINAH [*At phone*]. Oh, yes, Mr. Fisher—you know my voice—yes, Mr. Fisher—

FISHER'S VOICE [*At other end*]. Is Mr. Merritt there?

DINAH. No, Mr. Fisher. [*FISHER'S VOICE mumbles something indistinct*] Oh, Mr. Fisher—

FISHER'S VOICE. Tell him I sent the memorandum.

DINAH. Yes, I'll leave a note. Good-bye, Mr. Fisher. [*She rings off, scribbles on pad*] Do you know Mr. Fisher?

[*AGNES shakes her head. DINAH looks triumphant and is about to exit right when MERRITT enters left rear*]

MERRITT. What the devil are you doing here?

DINAH [*Turning at door*] Me, Mr. Merritt?

MERRITT. Not you, Miss McCabe—

DINAH. I just left those papers from Mr. Fisher.

MERRITT [*Glances at the papers, and shouts angrily*]. Miss McCabe—why do you bring these here? They're clearly marked for the accounting department.

DINAH [*Coming back to the desk*]. Gee, I must have got the baskets mixed—

MERRITT. Can't you read?

DINAH. Don't fire me, Mr. Merritt, I just love it here—

MERRITT [*Shouts fiercely*]. Don't be an imbecile, Miss McCabe— [*More gently*] You're not being fired—now get out—

DINAH. Yes, sir. [*She exits*]

AGNES. Thank God I'm not in her shoes.

MERRITT. What are you doing here, Aggie?

AGNES. Oh, weeping and gnashing my teeth.

MERRITT. If it's just the same to you, do it some other place.

AGNES. You look all shot, Raymond—

MERRITT. I just had a run-in with Ginsberg—right at each other's throats—

AGNES [*Interested*]. Is that so? I guess that's the end of Ginsberg!

MERRITT. Certainly, but he don't know it! He's in there talking his head off. I expected a showdown. I thought he was going to pull something big, but he's just juggling crazy schemes in his imagination—I couldn't stand it.

AGNES. He gets my goat, too.

MERRITT. I was really fond of Ginsberg—still am in a way!

AGNES. Tell me, Ray, what's the matter with him?

MERRITT. Pipe dreams—swelled head— [*Looking at her sharply*] What about it?

AGNES [*Trying to avoid showing the tension she feels*]. I think he's the saddest man in the world.

MERRITT [*Amazed*]. Why?

AGNES. He's all twisted and funny, and he wants to be a great man—and he wants to be sweet—

MERRITT. That's a funny word.

AGNES. Yes, he wants to—but he can't—Gee, I like Jews, they're all poets or sugar daddies—or both!

MERRITT. You can't generalize, there's all kinds. As for him, he's emotional and greedy, got no control.

AGNES. No, but he's big at least, goes after things in a big way, smashes after things like a madman!

MERRITT [*Thoughtfully*]. Dangerous!

AGNES [*Nods understandingly*]. Don't I know it? From where I'm looking he's got a danger sign on him as big as your hat. [MERRITT *laughs*] You're so nice and simple, Raymond. Thank God you're simple.

MERRITT. That sounds as if you came to borrow money?

AGNES. I did, but I don't want it now—

MERRITT. Really?

AGNES. I'm a mess; I've got no future and my past is unpleasant to look at—

MERRITT. There are always men—

AGNES. Always—too many! I don't like men, I don't like work, and I'm not the kind who can get comfort out of a really good book—

MERRITT [*Kindly*]. I'm glad you're through with Ginsberg.

AGNES. He's just the comic relief— [*Irrelevantly*] He wants to marry me— [MERRITT *laughs*] Don't laugh, it's kinda wonderful the way he said it—but I'd much rather jump in the river.

MERRITT. Don't do it, Aggie—

AGNES. God, I want to be a white woman, Ray, but I'm just naturally rotten.

MERRITT. Why don't you pray to God to make you a good girl?

AGNES. But there's one rotten thing I won't do—I won't marry him, I won't—

MERRITT. Why should you? He's probably dead broke. He's being fired and he won't find it easy to find another job—

AGNES. Damn you, I wasn't thinking of that—

MERRITT. Just making a practical observation—

[SONNENBERG *enters left rear, followed by SOL*]

SONNENBERG [*To MERRITT*]. I think there's no need to go into this further—Mr. Ginsberg has stated his case with great emphasis—since you feel that his suggestions are not practical, I feel that I have no course—

MERRITT [*Glancing at SOL, turns away*]. Quite—may I present Miss Carter, Mr. Sonnenberg?

SONNENBERG. Charmed . . .

MERRITT [*To SOL*]. You've had your say—

SONNENBERG. I think there's no question of your entire fairness in meeting the issue, Mr. Merritt . . . Good day. [*He bows to AGNES*] My regrets, Mr. Ginsberg.

SOL. O.K. Mr. Sonnenberg—I'm not a bum loser!

MERRITT [*Seeing SONNENBERG to the door*]. What's your general impression of the market?

SONNENBERG. Did you ever read the works of Confucius, Mr. Merritt?

MERRITT. Can't say I have—didn't know he was an expert on stocks?

SONNENBERG. That's my point—he knew just as much about them as I do—
[*He exits*]

MERRITT. That's that—

AGNES. I'm going—

SOL [*To AGNES*]. Wait a minute— [*Turning to MERRITT*] I'm going myself but I want to say a word first—a matter of business—

AGNES. I can't stay—

SOL. You'll hear me—and you too. I couldn't talk to that Wall Street mummy in there— [*He approaches MERRITT*] Let's get down to brass tacks— [*He takes slip of paper, crumpled, from his pocket*] I don't know all the legal terms, but I know what this means: an officer of a corporation that makes private use of the firm's money is in a hot spot—

MERRITT. If you wanted to make any charges against me, why didn't you say so in there?

SOL. That wasn't the chance I was looking for—I'm just showing you this to warn you—don't be so careless again—

MERRITT. If you want to take me to a court of law, go ahead—

SOL. Let's not talk about the law, it's so nasty—Aren't we friends? Would I do anything that would hurt the firm?

MERRITT. You're no longer connected with the firm—

SOL. O.K.

MERRITT. What do you propose to do?

SOL. I want to talk turkey—

[*SARAH enters right*]

SARAH. I beg your pardon, Mr. Merritt—

MERRITT. Hold on a minute, Miss Glassman— [*Turns to SOL*] What are you going to do with that paper—

SOL. What makes you so nervous? There's lots I might do with it if I wasn't so much of a gentleman—

MERRITT. I don't get you—

SOL. Whenever a guy is a gentleman, he wants to get something—

MERRITT. What do you want?

SOL. Well, I want to be General Manager of the department of Promotion and New Accounts.

MERRITT. What?

SOL. With a three-year contract permitting me to carry out my policies in my way!

MERRITT. You've got your crust—

SOL. A crust like I got—a man that can fight you tooth and nail like I have and will go on doing it—that's worth cash to you!

AGNES. They've got no pride, his kind, I mean.

SOL. Too much . . . I got too much to take a licking.

MERRITT. You were ready to fight me with your hands a minute ago.

SOL. Forget it and do business.

MERRITT. You forget easily.

SOL. I got to, that's my secret!

MERRITT. I don't want you here on any terms—get out—

SOL. Is that final?

MERRITT. Take your proof with you, do what you like with it—but get out—

SOL. You'll regret it—

MERRITT. I won't deal with a crook—

SOL. The Hell I am— [*He starts to tear up the paper, violently excited*]
I'm smart enough to get ahead, I don't need this— Here's your Goddamn proof— [*He throws the bits of paper in MERRITT's face*]

MERRITT. Go to the devil—

SOL. All right! I bide my time, I handle the materials . . . it's you that's afraid, 'cause I beat you at this game or die! I go to the devil, yes, 'cause that's what I choose; he'll help me, too, 'cause I give my heart's blood for money, much money to win with— I'll get as much money as those Wall Street bankers, two years, five years, ten years maybe, this little dump of yours will be a drop in the ocean—I'll just spit in the ocean and you won't be here any more—

MERRITT. Go on, you're dreaming—

SOL. Sure. . . . Can you turn down a man with a dream like that?

AGNES. If you're ready now, I'll tag along with you, Sol—

MERRITT. What?

AGNES. If you're out of a job and licked, Sol, it's O.K. with me—just 'cause you're so romantic and impossible, I'll tag along!

SOL. How far?

AGNES. Any place; I'm going to marry you this afternoon.

SOL. That's nice . . . sure, that's nice.

[*SARAH watches speechless, broken*]

MERRITT. You talked yourself into something.

AGNES [*Puzzled by SOL's apparent preoccupation with his own thoughts*]. Glad?

SOL. Nothing can stop me now— [*He turns to MERRITT*] Sorry you can't see my proposition, but I'm not as sorry as you'll be. You'll be on the rocks in a year—

MERRITT. Will I?

SOL. You better get onto yourself, Merritt—you're a handshaker and a good fellow—you spend your time in speakeasies while I sweat my head off working—are you going to kill yourself just because you're sore at me?

MERRITT. Your Goddamn conceit!

SOL. You're cutting your throat right here in front of my eyes and you haven't got the sense to know it—you owe this firm money and the market's draining you dry—I can pull you out— Give me a free hand and I'll show a profit here that will knock your eye out—

MERRITT. I have no authority to entertain such a proposition—You know as well as I do it's up to Sonnenberg.

SOL [*Looks at MERRITT with quick comprehension*]. Oh, you been thinking? [*MERRITT doesn't answer*] You better think fast— Don't give me that gaff about Sonnenberg—he was half sold on my ideas before he got to you—

MERRITT [*Still thoughtful*]. No, I'll see you in hell first—

SOL. That's a date, but you don't mean it— [*Pursuing his advantage*] You can fix it with Sonnenberg— Give him a line about ethics—we got enough ethics between us to fix anything—

MERRITT. In a way I hand it to you—

SOL. What, the job?

MERRITT. Give me time to think—

SOL. One minute is plenty of time—you already decided—

MERRITT [*Nervously, exhausted by SOL's pounding energy*]. Nothing else you want?

SOL. Sure, there's the matter of salary—I want twenty thousand a year—

MERRITT. Make it fifteen.

SOL. All right, the main thing is to build up the firm's profit. I can wait for mine—

MERRITT. Get this straight, it's not a matter of these threats . . . I see your side of it—your ambition—no reason why we shouldn't make a go of it—as enemies—

SOL. Sure, stay sore, it keeps the mind active.

MERRITT. I suppose you'll take my word—

SOL. Sure. [*MERRITT turns to door left rear*] Going to make the arrangements now?

MERRITT. No, I'm going to get a drink—

[*MERRITT exits left rear. SOL sits at the desk, drawing lines on the blotter moodily with a pencil, completely disregarding the two women*]

SARAH [*Comes forward hesitantly*]. I wish you both happiness.

SOL. Oh, you mean her! [*He looks at AGNES thoughtfully, turns back to SARAH*] Did I pull it off or didn't I? Who's the worm now? [*He is surprised at the expression of SARAH's face*] Why do you look so strange? I think you're cursing me in your heart!

SARAH. No, there's a curse on you; it's not my fault. [*She turns abruptly and exits right*]

SOL [*Looking at desk in front of him*]. I like this desk. I'm going to have one like it in my office!

AGNES. All right, but you might at least admit I'm here.

SOL. Yes, I see you. What time does the license bureau close?

AGNES. Don't know, I never went there.

SOL. Four o'clock, I guess—lots of time— [*Softly speaking to himself*] I fit it together like a picture puzzle—money or love, you win if you wait and watch—

AGNES [*Quietly*]. Now you got me, what are you going to do with me?

SOL. We shall see—I'll give you things—houses, jewels—that stuff you're wearing is nothing—just wait— [*His eyes seem to be looking right through her. She shivers a little*]

AGNES. I'm scared.

SOL. You don't have to be scared, you belong to me now!

ACT THREE: SCENE ONE

AN afternoon in January, 1932.

The scene is the same. It is late on a winter afternoon. Outside the big windows the grey of the sky is dismal and menacing.

Center, standing against the grey of the windows, stands SONNENBERG, rocking back and forth on the balls of his feet. At the desk left sits SOL. He is immaculately dressed. He has gained in weight and solidity. He looks older than he is. He is talking suavely as the curtain rises.

SOL. But there's one point on which I insist . . . you can call it a matter of sentiment if you like, but it means a great deal to me—the name of this firm shall be Ginsberg and Company—it's a matter of pride with me.

[*A pause. SONNENBERG looks at him smilingly*]

SONNENBERG [*Chuckles, nodding*]. Have you informed Merritt of the impending changes?

SOL [*Easily*]. Of course not—I felt it was only right to get your O.K. before I proceed—any other course wouldn't be . . . [*With a sarcastic grin*] Well, it wouldn't be ethical, would it? [*SONNENBERG returns the grin*]

SONNENBERG. You're in a position to write your own ticket.

SOL. I'm playing fair, Mr. Sonnenberg— [*SONNENBERG continues to smile and rock back and forth on his feet*] I got control because every time the market dropped, Merritt needed money and he came to me. I did him a favor in helping him out: I consider I'm making a very generous settlement.

SONNENBERG. There's no question that the arrangement you outline is more than generous.

SOL. And a good thing for the business; it means we can push ahead!

SONNENBERG [*Walking over to the desk, scanning SOL thoughtfully*]. I admire you, Ginsberg; you're a dynamo, an electric fountain of energy—

SOL. I work like a dog, my brain buzzes so I can't sleep at night—

SONNENBERG. Never satisfied, are you?

SOL [*Shakes his head gloomily*]. No . . . [*Looking up at SONNENBERG suddenly*] Are you?

SONNENBERG. I? . . . Of course; I know how to relax: take my advice and learn to relax—

SOL. You can afford to take it easy. You're so rich you can sit back and laugh at everybody else—

SONNENBERG. My dear friend, I've lost two-thirds of my fortune in the last three months—

SOL [*In amazement*]. Is that a fact? You don't look worried—

SONNENBERG. On the contrary, I'm accustomed to very expensive pleasures: I should rather die than curtail my pleasures.

SOL. I got enough money right now to buy any pleasure there is—

SONNENBERG. Then look around and choose—

SOL [*Gloomily*]. Nothing to it—

SONNENBERG. For my part, I have certain cultural interests: art, beauty, sensuality in moderation—

SOL. I don't get a kick out of that stuff, I want something bigger—

SONNENBERG. For instance?

SOL. Power: money is power—

SONNENBERG. I'm not so sure—

SOL. What?

SONNENBERG. You aim too high; I've studied your character, Ginsberg. [*Pointing his finger at him vigorously*] You're a revolutionist—

SOL. The hell I am—

SONNENBERG. Never content, pursuing a vision, you want to change the whole world in the image of your own ego—you want to stand on a platform among millions of faces—alone! Telling them what to do and how to do it . . . Am I right?

SOL. You're kidding me, Mr. Sonnenberg.

SONNENBERG. Not at all, I'm warning you. [*Gravely*] Take my advice—get some cultural hobby, it's a great comfort to the inner man.

SOL. Thanks for the tip— [*He rises and they shake hands. Opening door, front, left*] You're a great joker, Mr. Sonnenberg—

SONNENBERG. I'm not joking. Good-bye—

[*He exits left front. SOL closes the door, returns to the desk, sits, and rings buzzer under desk. MISS FARLEY enters right; she is a very trim college girl, attractive, with a rather cultured voice, an ideal secretary efficient and unassuming*]

MISS FARLEY. Yes, sir.

SOL. Mr. Merritt hasn't returned yet, has he?

MISS FARLEY. No, sir. Your wife called a few moments ago—I told her you couldn't be disturbed and to call back—

SOL. Anything else?

MISS FARLEY. Mr. Fisher wants to see you.

SOL. Tell Fisher I'll see him shortly— [*He moves a key on dictaphone*] Hello—you got those papers ready?

[*A voice answers on dictaphone—"I've drawn them up, but I'd like to see you about this"*—Meanwhile telephone rings, and MISS FARLEY answers it]

MISS FARLEY [*At phone*]. In a moment, Mrs. Ginsberg—

SOL [*On dictaphone*]. Bring 'em in right now— [*He turns off the dictaphone*. MISS FARLEY *hands him the telephone*]

SOL [*On phone*]. Hello, dear— [*Looking up at MISS FARLEY*] All right, Miss Farley, send Turner in. [*MISS FARLEY nods and exits right*. SOL *continues on phone*] How was the auction? I don't know where we'll put all that antique furniture, but if you want it it's all right with me . . . Sure, come in and get it—will a couple of hundred be all right? Sure . . . [*He rings off*. Meanwhile TURNER *has entered right with a contract in his hand*. He waits for SOL to finish. SOL *looks up*] Sit down, Mark, have a cigar—

TURNER. Thanks— [*He takes one from the silver box*]

SOL. Let's have a look at that contract— [*He takes it*] You're lucky you're not married, Mark—my wife's just bought a set of old French furniture. She's got the house so full of truck you can't move around without falling over something that used to belong to Louis the Fifteenth—

TURNER [*Laughs*]. You can afford it—

SOL. I work like a horse making it and she works like a horse spending it—she buys everything she sees, and never so much as asks the price—can you picture it?

TURNER. All in the game—

SOL. Money to buy stuff to fill the house to get a bigger house to hold more stuff—it's a Goddamn treadmill—

TURNER. That's America—

SOL [*Who has been studying the contract while he has been talking*]. You're sure he'll never have any come-back if he signs this?

TURNER. It lets him out—if he's fool enough to sign it.

SOL. I'll force him to sign it.

TURNER. Is there anything human left in you at all?

SOL. You better watch your own step, Turner—you're not up to scratch—a man that has a hangover three hundred and sixty-five days out of the year—

TURNER. If that's the way you feel about it, I'll walk right out—

SOL. No, you won't, because you're useful to me, and you haven't got the guts to leave a soft berth and start law practice all over again—

TURNER. Yes, I'm weak enough to stay!

SOL [*Feeling quite master of the situation, he speaks with suave good nature*]. I apologize for being so crude just now—forgive me, will you?

TURNER. Forget it.

SOL [*Looks up at him with a thoughtful smile*]. I'll tell you something, Mark, if it'll make you feel any better. . . . I envy you!

TURNER [*Astonished*]. Why?

SOL. Sure . . . you enjoy life . . . am I right?

TURNER [*Amused*]. In my own simple way—

SOL. You drink like a fish and you have a different woman every night—

TURNER [*Shrugs*]. It's a habit—

SOL. An expensive habit—

TURNER. Yes, I pay my way—

SOL. You think it's a pleasure to go to bed with something you've bought?

TURNER. They're all bought—some of them work on a long term basis, but I prefer the cash and carry girls—they're less trouble—

SOL. You're a lucky man, Mark.

TURNER. Not so lucky.

SOL. Sure . . . you don't want much, but you get it.

[TURNER *exits right*. SOL *rings buzzer at his desk*. MISS FARLEY *enters right*]

Get me three hundred dollars from the cashier, in tens and twenties—

MISS FARLEY. Yes, sir . . . will you see Mr. Fisher now?

SOL [*As if he were thinking of something else*]. Sure—

[MISS FARLEY *goes to door right, motions FISHER to come in and exits*. FISHER *appears, looking greyer and soberer than ever. He stands hesitantly, evidently in real fear of SOL*]

What's on your mind, Fisher?

FISHER. It's something personal—I . . . the fact is—

SOL [*Interrupting*]. Don't dodder, Fisher, you make me nervous—

FISHER. Sorry . . . I'd really prefer my wife to tell you: may I bring her in?

SOL. Drag her in—what's it all about?

[FISHER *goes to door right, and DINAH enters bashfully. FISHER takes her hand and pulls her toward SOL's desk*]

Are you having a fight and want me to fix it up for you? This isn't a court of domestic relations, you know—

DINAH. Oh, we don't fight—

SOL. Then you belong in a museum—

FISHER. Tell him, Dinah—

DINAH. I'm quitting work, Mr. Ginsberg—

SOL. Is that so? Has old Fisher struck oil?

DINAH. You tell him, Harry—

FISHER. She's expectant, Mr. Ginsberg—

SOL. Oh—

DINAH. What I expect is a baby—

SOL. That's probably what you'll get! Name him after me and I'll start him off with a savings account—

DINAH. I thought I'd name him Harry—

FISHER. That's natural, isn't it, Mr. Ginsberg?

SOL. The whole thing is so natural it don't need any comment—

DINAH. I want to come back afterwards, Mr. Ginsberg. I been here nine years and I just love this place—

SOL. Nine years . . . and in all that time you've never learned how to spell! Well, I'm surprised and pleased that the two of you can create a child between you—it's something to be proud of.

DINAH [*Quite transfixed*]. It does seem wonderful—

SOL [*Looking at her keenly*]. Does it? As wonderful as that, huh! This once you can have your job back, Dinah, but don't make a habit of it—

DINAH. Thanks, Mr. Ginsberg.

SOL [*Pushing them both toward the door*]. And take up spelling while you've got the leisure—You can quit this week, Dinah, you'll get a month's pay—

FISHER. She's been scared to tell you, Mr. Ginsberg—but I told her you'd be a prince about it.

[FISHER and DINAH exit]

SOL [*Alone, with a grim smile*]. A prince, huh . . .

[SARAH enters right. She is well-dressed, business-like, suggesting a woman who holds a responsible position]

SARAH. Can I see you?

SOL. Why not, Sarah?

MISS FARLEY [*Entering right*]. Here's the money, Mr. Ginsberg.

SOL. Thank you. [*He stuffs the bills in his trouser pocket without counting them*. MISS FARLEY exits]

SARAH. It's a personal matter.

SOL. Sure. Don't be so formal, Sarah . . . just because I'm your employer doesn't change an old friendship, does it? [*She says nothing*] Every time I look at you, I envy you . . . you're a lucky girl and you deserve it—handling some of our biggest accounts and drawing down a classy salary: you're young . . . handsome you are too! Me, I feel like an old man, I've got too many worries and not enough money! [*Looking at her with a sly smile, consciously kidding her*] You look to me like you didn't have a worry in the world . . . radiant, that's what you are! That's the word for you, radiant!

SARAH. Thank you . . . I'm only worried about one thing right now: I wondered if you'd mind giving me an accounting, the money, you know?

SOL [*His brow clouding, shrugs before he replies*]. Oh, why bring that up? Didn't I explain it all to you last week?

SARAH. You told me a lot of complicated things about the stock market, I couldn't understand what it really meant—but for two years now I've been giving you half my salary each week to invest for me; you promised you'd double it and triple it for me—

SOL. Well, have I, or haven't I?

SARAH. I don't know, you act so queer about it.

SOL. Call me a thief next.

SARAH [*In the same simple straightforward manner*]. I don't want to leave it in your hands any more. I want you to give it back to me.

SOL. Maybe right now I haven't got it.

SARAH [*Frightened, reacting to this as he knew she would*]. What do you mean?

SOL [*Watching her sharply*]. What are you so frightened about? Is money so important?

SARAH. It's all I've got, it's my life savings—

SOL. Glad to hear you say so, that's a healthy attitude: In the old days we didn't know money was so important [*He chuckles*]

SARAH. What are you laughing at?

SOL. Thinking of old times—remember how we talked about changing the world?

SARAH. It still needs changing!

SOL. Good! A brave little idealist, but just the same you want money in a sock—tell me, are they still at it? Do they still sweat at those crowded meetings? And we here, high up where the air is clear, we never hear a whisper!

SARAH. I see what it is: I'm the old times to you, so you want to kill me because I haunt you like a memory . . . something you can't escape—

SOL. What do you mean? I'm not escaping from anything—

SARAH. Aren't you?

SOL. My better self, is that the idea? Don't get excited about the money, Sarah; before you lose a cent I would give my heart's blood, I'd give blood if it would do you good, Sarah.

SARAH. I don't want your sloppy sentiment, I can't stand it! I want what you owe me, I want it today.

SOL. Just today you must trust me—maybe tomorrow—

SARAH. It's always tomorrow with you.

SOL. No, no, a happy tomorrow will come.

SARAH [*Bursts into wild tears*]. Not for me, never for me!

SOL [*Touched, with genuine kindness*]. There . . . you shouldn't worry so much. [*MISS FARLEY enters right, with a card*]

MISS FARLEY. This man says he knows you, Mr. Ginsberg.

SOL [*Takes the card*]. I'll settle up with you today, Sarah. [*Glancing at the card, surprised*] I'll say he does—send him in, Miss Farley—

MISS FARLEY. Yes, sir. [*She turns to door right. SOL passes the card to SARAH*]

SOL. Can you beat that, Sarah?

SARAH. That is funny—

SOL. Stay here and see him—you remember the boy—

[*JEFFERY HALLIBURTON enters right. He is well-dressed, but he looks a little seedy—he has none of the cockiness of his earlier days. He is afraid, but forcing himself to appear sure and confident. There is a certain plodding sincerity about him. He carries a leather brief case which is rather worn*]

JEFFERY. How are you, Mr. Ginsberg?

SOL. Glad to see you, Halliburton— [*They shake hands*]

JEFFERY. Hello, Miss Glassman, this is like old times—

SARAH. Indeed—

SOL [*Interrupts*]. No it isn't, it's very different—

JEFFERY. Yes, you're right, Mr. Ginsberg—

SOL. Oh, I'm right, am I? Once upon a time you weren't so quick to agree with me—

JEFFERY. I hesitated a long time about coming to see you, Mr. Ginsberg—

SOL [*Interrupts him, sizing him up, looking at the worn brief case, with brutal directness*]. Then you're selling something! Is it the Encyclopedia Britannica, or a novelty cigarette case?

JEFFERY [*With an uneasy laugh*]. Not quite that! I'm handling bonds, for McIntyre and Jones . . .

SOL [*Wearily*]. Don't make the rest of the speech—I've heard other fellows make it, but I don't want to hear it from you—

JEFFERY [*Crestfallen*]. If you feel that way about it—

SOL [*Still sizing him up*]. You ought to get a new brief-case! How long have you been in the bond business?

JEFFERY. About two months—I've tried my hand at a lot of things—

SOL. Married, aren't you? [JEFFERY *nods*] How big a family have you got?

JEFFERY. Two kids—we're out in Forest Hills.

SOL [*Brutally*]. And all you can do for your family is pound the pavement with a brief-case full of lousy securities— [JEFFERY *gives SOL an angry look and turns away*]

JEFFERY. I'll be going . . .

SARAH [*Angrily*]. Why do you want to make it harder for him?

SOL. Why should I pity him? He started with all the cards stacked on his side—a college education and a lot of rich friends—

JEFFERY [*Turns vigorously*]. Don't worry about pitying me, Ginsberg, I'm getting along—I'm a happy man—

SOL [*Startled*]. What do you mean, happy?

JEFFERY. Thanks for giving me two minutes of your time—

SOL [*Stopping him*]. What's your hurry? I'll make you a proposition— [JEFFERY *turns to him*] How would you like a job? . . . [He hesitates] As Fisher's assistant, in the statistical department—at fifty a week?

JEFFERY. Are you being funny?

SOL. Not me.

JEFFERY [*His voice actually trembling*]. When can I begin?

SOL. Come along, I'll bring you to Fisher right now—

JEFFERY. Thanks— [As they start for door right, MERRITT enters left rear]

MERRITT. I just got back this minute, Sol—

SOL. Here's a fraternity brother of yours, R-M.

MERRITT. Hello, Jeff.

JEFFERY. Hello, Mr. Merritt—

SOL [*Patting JEFFERY good-naturedly*]. He's going to be with us from

now on. Come with me, Jeff—I'll be back in two minutes, Raymond. [sol and JEFFERY exit right. MERRITT is astonished]

MERRITT. Well I'll be damned! [Thoughtfully] I didn't know Sol would do anything as kind as that.

SARAH. I did! Every now and then Sol comes out of his shell and you see how fine he really is.

MERRITT [Understandingly]. That means a lot to you, doesn't it? [She is silent]

MERRITT. You're a fool, Sarah; you waste your life on a single-track emotion—you can't go on like this.

SARAH [Quietly]. I can go on—

MERRITT. I've been watching you, you're unhappy. . . . I love you—

SARAH. Love. . . . You don't know what it means!

MERRITT. Don't I? That depends on how you look at it! But it's done me a lot of good: loving you, even at a distance, has made me see something I never believed in—the soul, I think—

SARAH. Mine's all twisted and dark.

MERRITT. I've caught glimpses once or twice.

SARAH. Awful, isn't it? Like looking down a deep well . . . you look at me now like you thought I was crazy—

MERRITT. Why don't you marry me?

SARAH [Laughs hysterically]. I suppose I should be grateful to you for asking, but I think it's funny—

MERRITT. What's to prevent it? It's a sensible plan!

SARAH. I don't want sensible plans—oh, any psychologist would size me up for you in about five minutes—I'm a highly emotional woman, so high-strung that it almost crosses the borderline of common sense—

MERRITT [Gravely]. If you'd give me a chance—

SARAH. To make a normal woman of me—a cosy love-life for two! [She laughs harshly] Thanks, no. . . . Love for me is something that burns you up, kills you . . . you die of it. . . . For all you know, I may be dying of it right now—

MERRITT [Tenderly, holding her arm]. My dear—

SARAH [Breaking away violently]. Don't touch me, I'll scream—

MERRITT. Sorry—

SARAH. It's not your fault—you're sweet to me, and I'm so wrought up I bawl you out like a mad woman— [sol enters right]

SOL [To MERRITT briskly as he enters]. Did you get the Excelsior Paint people sewed up?

MERRITT. Yes, we're to start a hundred thousand dollar campaign immediately for the household varnishes—

SOL [Briskly]. Miss Glassman will take care of that—

MERRITT. All right. . . . [To SARAH] It's a rush job; I'll explain it to you tonight if you're not too tired—

SARAH. I'd like to start right away—

MERRITT. You'll find a memorandum on my desk—look it over—I'll be in shortly— [SARAH *nods and exits left rear*. SOL *sits at his desk*]

SOL. Sit down, Raymond; have a cigar.

MERRITT. No thanks— [MERRITT *lights a cigarette*]

SOL [Thoughtfully *fingering the contract brought by TURNER, which lies on his desk*]. I'm thinking of making some changes around here.

MERRITT [Sarcastically]. It's nice of you to consult me.

SOL. In this case, it's necessary to consult you: are you satisfied with our present association, Raymond?

MERRITT [Uneasily]. It's all right, I'm not as ambitious as I once was.

SOL. Is that so? I am—

MERRITT [Drily]. So I've noticed: what are you getting at?

SOL. I worry a lot, Raymond.

MERRITT [Amused]. About the poor and needy, I suppose?

SOL. Yeh . . . sometimes . . . when you see those bread-lines on Broadway, it shows you how insecure everything is . . . why we know men that were millionaires a year ago that haven't got the price of a beer—

MERRITT. You're pretty safe.

SOL. Not enough, never enough! I wouldn't be safe if I had money to control the world.

MERRITT. What's the good of all your money, if you're not satisfied?

SOL. Are you? Don't you ever look at the moon and think, "I want to own it"? Don't you ever look at women, the glittering shiny kind you see sometimes in shows, and say "I'd like to show that Jane where to get off!"

MERRITT [Looks at SOL sharply]. What's this for, Sol? What are you getting at behind this smoke screen?

SOL. It's no smoke screen. . . . I'm just trying to tell you I'm not satisfied—I got to think of myself . . . my own future. . . . I could make three times the money if I ran this business alone.

MERRITT. What do you expect me to do?

SOL. What do you suppose? [Leaning across desk] You're quitting—

MERRITT. This is my business—

SOL. Don't be dizzy, Raymond! It's not yours any more, it's out of your reach, just like the moon is—

MERRITT. Been planning this, have you? Nursing a grievance.

SOL. What would I have a grievance about? We are friends.

MERRITT. Yes, there's really a very strong bond between us.

SOL. Sure. Let's not get soft about it.

MERRITT. A bond which makes us fight to the death, is that it?

SOL. It's got to be, Raymond! You and I are different people, we have different ideas, different methods. There's no room for both of us in one concern; it's not fair to either of us.

MERRITT. You can't buy me out of here with a million.

SOL [Suavely]. Well a million is a lot of money . . . what would you say your interest here was worth right now?

MERRITT. I haven't thought.

SOL. I have! I figured it out to a penny: a hundred thousand cash and five percent of the yearly net from now on: that would cover your rights, wouldn't it?

MERRITT. I don't know.

SOL. Well, what I'm offering you is two hundred thousand and eight percent of the yearly net: that's almost double what your share is worth, but it's not a question of money with me, Raymond, it's a question of pride. [*Tossing the contract to MERRITT*] Look it over.

MERRITT. Did you ever consider that I have a little pride myself? [*SOL shrugs*] Is Sonnenberg in on this?

SOL. Certainly—

MERRITT. You can't run this business alone, you're too unbalanced—I'm the ballast—

SOL. That's funny from a man that's lost his shirt in the market, while I've been piling up a fortune—

MERRITT. You've been lucky—crazy man's luck—

SOL. Sure, personally I'm crazy—even should I lie down on a piece of toast and tell you I'm a poached egg, my money mind keeps right on working—when I get violent put me in a straitjacket, but I'll still be able to guess the market!

MERRITT. Of course I'm in a position where I need ready money; I suppose you figured on that?

SOL. I'm being fair, Raymond, but I want my own way and I'm going to have it!

MERRITT. This is the rottenest thing you ever pulled.

SOL. Sure it's rotten, don't I know it? If a man's in business, he's got to use the methods that fit: I got no choice, business is rotten from the ground up!

MERRITT. You're actually talking like a radical—

SOL. Not me! To Hell with that—I turned my back on it, and I got to go on—I was a radical once, a boy . . . a fool of a boy—I murdered him, and he's waiting round every corner to murder me now—

MERRITT. What the devil do you mean?

SOL. Nothing. . . . I mean you got to sign that, no help for it.

MERRITT. Turner drew this?

SOL. Sure.

MERRITT. I'll consult another lawyer in the morning and let you know—

SOL. Then it's as good as settled—

MERRITT. I don't know—

SOL. All friendly, huh, Raymond? [*MISS FARLEY enters, right*]

MISS FARLEY. Excuse me, Mr. Ginsberg, Mrs. Ginsberg.

SOL. Send her in . . . wait a minute, Raymond; say hello to Aggie—

[*AGNES enters right, expensively dressed, her manner nervous and artificially gay*]

AGNES. Hello, people.

MERRITT. How are you, Mrs. Ginsberg?

SOL. Why so formal? [*They laugh*]

AGNES [*To MERRITT*]. You must come to dinner soon; we'll get a fourth and play bridge—

MERRITT. I should be delighted. See you later, Sol. [*He exits left rear;*

SOL *turns to his desk and sits gloomily*]

SOL. Are you in a hurry, Aggie?

AGNES. No, I'm meeting these people at eight—plenty of time to go home and dress.

SOL. Probably be another brawl—don't wake me up when you come home.

AGGIE. All right—why so gloomy?

SOL. I just had a fuss with Raymond—

AGGIE. Haven't you done enough to him, kicking him out of his own office?

SOL. I didn't kick him out: he preferred the library because it's more comfortable and it's got a shower—but that don't matter now, he's through.

AGGIE. Through? I suppose you'll say he'll be more comfortable out of the business entirely.

SOL. What's it to you?

AGGIE. The more I see of you, the sorer you make me—

SOL. Same here—why argue? [*He pulls the roll of bills out of his pocket and tosses it across the desk*] Here's what you came for—

AGGIE [*Stuffing it in her purse*]. Thanks—

SOL. You still come around for your pay, Aggie, just like with him—

AGGIE. My God, can't you forget?

SOL. No.

AGGIE. You hold against me things that happened years ago, drag 'em up on every occasion—for what?

SOL. For what?

AGGIE. It's a mess—

SOL. What's so bad about it? Everything you want I give you—have I ever refused you anything?

AGNES. You hang jewels on me like a faithful slave; but I don't happen to be a slave and I don't like it.

SOL. You're no slave, you don't wear a ball and chain—you go out to parties with your own friends, you jazz around without so much as asking me—

AGNES. Nerves—

SOL. Sure nerves make you buy everything you lay your eyes on—a painting by Cézanne or a Marie Antoinette bed or a new electric vibrator—pile up things . . . rosewood and teakwood and mahogany . . . diamonds, rubies, gold—for them, you make an ape of me—

AGNES. Do you know what I'm going to do! I'm going out to Reno and get it over with—

SOL. No you don't—

AGNES. Why not?

SOL. I won't let you go—never—

AGNES. What do you want me for? We're at each other's throats all the time.

SOL. If the whole facts about us were spoken, I mean *all* of it, it's fit to make anyone kill themselves, jump from that window. . . . [*She walks over and stares out the window. SOL repeats bitterly*] Yes sir, jump from that window.

AGNES. You know it, why don't you jump?

SOL. Money keeps me here, tied down with bags of it.

AGNES. You just worry about that to keep your mind off other things—just to cover up your own lack—bah . . . you're not a man!

SOL. Why not?

AGNES. Because all you've got is sensuality and greed and imagination.

SOL. I thought that was enough to make one of God's creatures—

AGNES. No, there's courage . . . courage to throw one thing away to get the other.

SOL. Would you mind explaining that . . . in words of one syllable?

AGNES. You won't give up anything—you won't give me up, though you hate me. Look at it fairly, Sol: when you put the ring on my finger I was crazy happy. Love, honor and obey is gonna mean something in this case, I said to myself—then I found out you just wanted to torture me all the time.

SOL. I won't let you go, Aggie. . . . I know you're no good . . . but I go hot and cold when you're near me!

AGNES. Then, Sol, why don't you have the courage to try—make it real—

SOL. Get away from me—you can't trap me with that stuff; it's not you at all—the lust and splendor I've known are in my own mind—there's pure beauty burning in my mind—

AGNES. Damn your imagination!

SOL. It's like the places in the ads—Deauville, Riviera, Lido—they're heaven in your mind, but they're a lot of noise and a dollar for a twenty-cent cigar when you get there. Hell, it's all dust!

AGNES. Then what in the name of common sense do you want?

SOL. Me! I lust after strange women and strange gods—

AGNES. Oh, nonsense—

SOL. To you it's nonsense, 'cause you got no heart—

AGNES. Oh, haven't I?

SOL. A woman that cheats her marriage bed with practical strangers 'cause it's a habit she contracted in youth—

AGNES. That's a lie, you're the one that cheats—

SOL. I'd like to tear your skin to make you feel—but it's no use! I know your heart—what there is of it—the dirty little reality of it.

AGNES. You don't know me at all—you make up things about me—you got every part of me in a card index, haven't you? The wax face—the jewels—the hot kisses— [*She beats her fists against him violently*] That's

not me—You're too selfish to see the real me that's standing here screaming,
 "Look at me! . . . look at me!"

SOL [*Seizing her roughly*]. I'm looking right through you—

AGNES. You're hurting me—

SOL. Am I?

AGNES. You got fingers like claws—

SOL. I'd like to kill you just to see you squirm—

[*AGNES screams. The room has become quite grey—suddenly the door left rear opens, casting a bright beam of light on the two struggling figures. MERRITT enters, SARAH following him, remaining at edge of lighted doorway. SOL quickly releases AGNES*]

MERRITT. What's up?

SOL. Nothing much—for a minute I felt like killing my wife—I guess that's old-fashioned stuff, isn't it, Raymond?

AGNES. I was scared green—

SOL. She says she's through with me, Raymond—why don't you take her?

MERRITT. Calm down, Sol—

SOL. It's a fair proposition, I take the business and you take my wife in exchange. . . . We four have been tangled up together long enough—I'm through with the bunch of you—I'll go on alone—you're out, Raymond—
 [*Turning to AGNES*] Get a divorce— [*Turning to SARAH*] And you, Sarah, meet me here tonight. I'll give you an accounting and hand you a check—Let's make an end of it, bury our loves and hates in the ashcan—and start over! I'm going out and cool off— [*He exits left front. The three people stare at one another*]

AGNES. He doesn't mean a word of it—He's just letting off steam—

MERRITT. I'm going out of here and get a stiff drink.

AGNES. Several, I'd say—may I come, Raymond?

MERRITT. You?

AGNES. Don't look so dumb about it! An old-fashioned riot would do us both a lot of good.

MERRITT. Not a bad idea—one moment. . . . [*He exits through open door left*]

AGNES. Want to come, Miss Glassman?

SARAH. No, I'll wait here for him. . . . [*MERRITT reappears carrying hat, coat and cane*]

AGNES. Nothing like drowning your sorrows. . . .

[*MERRITT looks at SARAH for a minute. There is nothing he can say. He exits left front with AGNES. AGNES' musical laugh echoes for a moment as the door shuts. SARAH sits at SOL's desk, her face in shadow, the light from open door left rear falling on her hands that twist on the desk in front of her*]

SARAH [*Mutters in agonized voice*]. Drown your sorrows . . . drown your sorrows . . . [*Her voice becomes almost a scream as she repeats the words and the stage goes black*] Drown your sorrows. . . . [*Black out*]

ACT THREE: SCENE TWO

THE same scene. Early the next morning.

The icy winter dawn is brightening outside the windows left. The lamp on SOL's desk is lighted, and SARAH sits beside the desk, waiting quietly. After a moment, SOL enters right, looks at her with a pleased grunt. He is distraught and tired, evidently under a considerable strain.

SOL. Um . . . you? What you doing here?

SARAH. I've been here all night.

SOL. You? Just sitting there? That's foolish. What time is it?

SARAH. Nearly six, getting light.

SOL. So you've been here all night?

SARAH. Yes, you heard me. You told me to wait here. I didn't mind, I had to think about such a lot.

SOL. Me too!

[He takes a small pearl-handled revolver from the pocket of his overcoat, tosses it on the desk, takes off the coat, throws the coat in a corner and sits]

SARAH. What's that?

SOL. Oh, that? Pretty, isn't it? I gave it to her for her birthday; said she wanted it beside her bed, scared having so much jewelry and things . . . maybe she wanted it for something else, maybe she was scared of me.

SARAH. But you're really a gentle person, Sol.

SOL. No, I've treated her pretty rough all along, couldn't help it. She's had that power over me, just to look at her would often give me the heebie-jeebies.

SARAH. You seen her since last night?

SOL. No—I waited home for her till four o'clock this morning—then I went out—

SARAH [Picks up revolver]. With this in your pocket? Why?

SOL. What did she say when she left here?

SARAH. She and Merritt went out together.

SOL. There you are—the cheap tart! But it don't matter—

SARAH. You'd use this?

SOL [Taking the revolver from her and looking at it]. Was I looking for her or looking for myself? . . . Been walking through empty streets for hours—zowie, it was cold . . . too cold to think—too cold to breathe— Can you help me?

SARAH. If I could, Sol—

SOL. How about it, Sarah? Why don't you shoot me yourself? You'd save me such a lot of trouble.

SARAH. One of your jokes—

SOL. Never more serious in my life!

SARAH. On account of her, your wife? You love her so much?

SOL. Love's got nothing to do with it—it's black magic!

SARAH. Don't you ever look at anything simply, Sol—

SOL. No, I prefer to make it complicated: I'm always contriving things; I got a demon in me makes me twist and turn people . . . I live in a series of contrivances, like a picture in the funny papers—

SARAH. It's not worth it—

SOL. What in Hell is worth anything?

SARAH. Ask yourself—

SOL. I'm not on speaking terms with myself. Help me, Sarah—there's so much between us!

SARAH. For God's sake, Sol, why do you lie so much? What does it get you?

SOL. My life has got me plenty.

SARAH. Has it?

SOL. Well, I'm young yet . . . maybe when I get a billion I'll support a theatre or an art gallery—these fellers that paint and write has got the goods on us—they create—I'd give my heart and liver to be able to create—

SARAH. There are other ways of creating—you're a failure and you're just making excuses!

SOL. Can a man be a failure with so much money in the bank?

SARAH. You've given yourself to the wrong things.

SOL. I have given nothing, I have taken, but not enough: I want to be a king and I'm a little business man. I used to dream about estates and yachts.

SARAH. Well, you've got them.

SOL. I got a lawn stretching all the way to the sea, blocks of it out on Long Island, but I can't go there, I hate it . . . no children. . . . Now I'll never have those brats, I'll never have anything, I'll just want and make it up, nothing to it—I wanted too much.

SARAH. Then stop wanting and be yourself.

SOL. I can't . . . that's the curse on me, the desire eating me, to be a great man, leading armies, plotting for the earth . . . this feller Christ took me up to a high mountain and showed me the earth, you know the story?

SARAH. You've got the story mixed.

SOL. No, this is my story . . . this Christ was a Jew dressed in a rainbow, and He said, "Do you want the earth, Solomon Ginsberg, or do you want to join me in a cellar, sweating and plotting with a few close friends?" Well, I made my choice and somewhere Christ is in a cellar laughing at me right now—don't I know it?

SARAH. You mean the people in cellars are stronger than you are?

SOL. Stronger than all Hell because they know what they want. Maybe I'll have the laugh on them yet—maybe when I get a billion I'll hand it to the Communist party—

SARAH. You're joking—

SOL. But a good joke, huh? Sol Ginsberg has built, now he tears down!

SARAH. I see one thing . . . sometimes I've thought you had ice water in you instead of blood. . . . But the blood's boiling in you—

SOL. The blood of a race. There's that, too—

SARAH. I don't mean that—

SOL. It goes back a long way—but how far ahead? I've broken the chain with the past . . . then what am I? A missing link—

SARAH. Of course, if you're afraid to look back or look ahead. . . . Why won't you be faithful to yourself! To your own strength? There's greatness in you!

SOL. For what? To make me smash my head against stone walls?

SARAH. You smash your head if you try to be what you're not.

SOL. I suppose I should be a sappy poet, an idealist?

SARAH. No, that's the whole trouble with you—you put two and two together and make six, and when you find it don't work you're so frightened you can't stand it—you think you're good 'cause you get money and spend money, you're just a cog in a wheel; you're so dumb you're surprised that you can't run the machinery— That's like putting your head on a railroad track and being surprised at what the train does to you: that's being soft—but you have brains enough to see what's going on and take sides. . . . One minute you brag about millions and the next minute you want to destroy! One's as crazy as the other—Go ahead and destroy, it just shows how weak you are! bring things, smash things—smash yourself too!

SOL. You're a big help: you knock the props right out from under me.

SARAH. You won't see; you'd rather die than see!

SOL. All this time, for several years, there's been a feeling between us, a little spark. I've kept it alive by this little fuss over money; that's why I did it, holding onto you, making you hate me! Foolish, wasn't it? [*He takes a check from his pocket, glancing at it thoughtfully*] Now that's clear, I might as well give you the check . . . Tell me, Sarah, what are you going to do with all this money?

SARAH. I have plans.

SOL. Huh? [*He offers her the check*] Seventy-two thousand dollars.

SARAH [*Astonished, frightened*]. I only gave you a little over four thousand!

SOL. I used it. I told you you'd get plenty of interest.

SARAH. But I couldn't—

SOL. You're not going to argue about money, after what we said about the filthy stuff? I wasn't unfaithful about the money, Sarah. . . . I been unfaithful in other ways.

SARAH. I'm going away, that's why I was so anxious.

SOL. Going away? Where to?

SARAH. I don't know—anywhere. . . .

SOL. You leave me? You leave the business? Just when I need you?

SARAH. You don't suppose I'm so fond of it here, do you?

SOL. I don't want you to go away. . . .

SARAH. I'm thinking of myself—I want to go somewhere where it's different—

SOL. There's no such place—

SARAH. I'm not sure—

SOL. That's just a way of escape . . . then you're just as mixed up as I am!

SARAH. Of course I am—I don't believe in anything—I've got to find some way of going ahead—I must—

SOL. I don't know which way to turn.

SARAH. Sol. . . .

SOL. I can't lose you—you! You and me are one; there's part of you locked in my heart—

SARAH. Why do you do this to me? What do you want of me?

SOL. Something to believe in, something to hold onto!

SARAH. You're so romantic, you won't see anything as it really is: for years you've hardly spoken a word to me, and all of a sudden you want me to believe you're dying of grief about me! It's ridiculous; people aren't like that; you don't know anything about people—

SOL. You're right there. Look at us in this office! Two men with a poisonous loving hatred, Merritt and me, both in love with a woman's soul, which is you—and in turn we possessed a woman's body—a cheap thing—a rotten thing to buy with money—

SARAH. You've got no right to say that—

SOL. You want the truth—there it is! That woman is nothing, a bone to be squabbled over! Bah!

SARAH. But you said—

SOL. Do you think I was upset about her today? Nonsense; I didn't give her a thought—it was other things . . . *you!* I turn to you now, a blind man turning to the light.

SARAH. I can't listen to you—

SOL [*Seizing her*]. Answer from your heart—Look at me, answer me! Has it ever changed?

SARAH. If you have any pity, don't—

SOL. I have no pity, I am trying to save myself. Do you know what it means to give in like this, after the years I've battled against it? . . . to turn to you like a man that's had every shred of pride torn from him?

SARAH. I don't give a damn for your pride—

SOL. Neither do I! Do you see what that means? Neither do I! I'm begging you!

SARAH. It's too late . . . a year ago maybe, if you'd told me this then . . . but now it's too late.

SOL. Why?

SARAH. What?

SOL. You heard me, I said *why?* You hold love in the hollow of your hand, maybe that's enough! All along it would have been enough, something as simple as that!

SARAH. You can't kill a person and then bring them back to life, Sol. If I gave in now, you'd make me more miserable—

SOL [*His arms about her*]. We're tired . . . both of us so tired. . . .

SARAH. You've turned a knife in my heart . . . and I haven't minded, because it was you turning the knife, turning. . . .

SOL. I hold you against me, gently . . . gently. . . . [*SARAH's arms go about him, she presses his head to her bosom*]

SARAH. It's no good, it hurts too much . . . bitter . . . it cuts into you, makes your flesh sore. . . . Hold me tighter, tighter! Crown me with thorns, burn me with kisses, tear me down, limb from limb . . . tear my body, trample me, make me a wilderness—we been walking in a wilderness, walking in the dark—show me the light—

SOL. We been blind; we haven't seen each other. [*The telephone rings*]

SARAH. Answer that.

SOL [*At phone*]. Hello . . . oh, it's you, Aggie; where are you? Who's with you? Merritt? The others went home? Oh you're dancing? Sure I can hear the music . . . you ought to have more sense . . . no, there's nothing unusual; I couldn't sleep so I came down to the office . . . is that so? You *must* be squiffy to feel so sentimental. . . . Sure I do. . . . I was upset last night but it's nothing serious. . . . No, don't come down to the office . . . you'd better go home and get some rest. . . . Alright darling . . . [*He rings off*] Jazzing around with Merritt, damn her! [*SARAH looks at him with bitter understanding*]

SARAH [*Slowly*]. You said—nothing serious—nothing unusual—you and your black magic!

SOL. What?

SARAH. You want everything to go on as it is—you won't give up anything—and me! You think you can fit me in?

SOL. It's complicated, we must arrange—

SARAH. You insist on cheapening everything, you dirty everything. . . .

SOL. Life is just like the market: you can't beat the game.

SARAH. For a minute you really loved me—for one awful minute—

SOL. I love you now—

SARAH. Don't spoil it with lies—I won't be mixed up in your black magic—I've seen you squeeze the blood out of everyone near you—

SOL. You think you're so far above me, you sit in judgment—

SARAH. No, I just want to get away.

SOL. Listen Sarah, I've been lucky; everything I've touched has turned to gold and it's no good—

SARAH. You won't turn me into gold.

SOL [*His arms tight about her*]. The money don't matter to you, I know that—

SARAH. Then let me go! Let me go—I'll kill you!

SOL. Because you love me?

SARAH. Yes, if that's the only way—

SOL. That's comic—that's funny—

SARAH. I see you now—loving nothing—lost— Let me go—

SOL. No, you're mine—

SARAH. It's my whole life, you'd break it for a moment's excitement, to show your strength—it's not fair—

SOL. I don't care what's fair.

SARAH. Don't do this, Sol, don't—I love you—

SOL. Say it again, say it with that crazy voice!

SARAH. Let me go! I love you, Sol, get away from me; don't touch me—you're horrible—it's not you—I love you, Sol, I—

[Her hand, fighting for freedom, has touched the pistol on the desk. Suddenly she raises it to his side and fires. He crumples against the desk. She stands away from him. The revolver clatters to the floor. They stand there looking at each other]

SARAH. Sol, I didn't mean—

SOL. Yes you did, don't spoil it by apologizing. You did right. I deserve this, I like it. . . . You . . . you got a fine sense of comedy, Sarah. I hand it to you.

SARAH. You're not hurt, you can't be—

SOL. I been dead a long time! Where the Hell is that revolver? I want it in my hand. Give me that gun, we got to make it look right—Give it here—and then get out—

[AGNES enters right. She is in a lovely evening dress, low-cut, gorgeous. She shows the effects of a night out. She comes gaily into the room, stops short, facing SARAH who still holds the revolver in her hand]

AGNES. Sol. . . .

[MERRITT follows AGNES into the room, in a dress suit, also rather exhausted by a big evening]

SOL. My God! This business of dying is the bunk like everything else. Let me look at you, Aggie . . . you'll be a snappy widow and rich too . . . change your name from Ginsberg to Grinnel, like we talked about, and don't . . . don't spend money too fast.

AGNES. Don't talk like that.

SOL. Can't I kid a little, even at the end?

MERRITT. I'll get a doctor—

SOL. Forget about doctors, Raymond.

SARAH. Sol—

SOL *[To SARAH]*. One time there was a Jew named Christ dressed up in a rainbow, he told the world plenty, maybe there'll be some more like him. . . . Me, I don't care! I'm only thinking of myself. Put me in a solid silver coffin with gold cupids—don't matter what it costs. . . .

[Starts to laugh, stiffens in SARAH's arms]

MERRITT. There's a doctor in the building; he's coming—

SARAH. I don't think a doctor will do much good.

MERRITT. Better give me that gun—

SARAH. I did it! I don't want any lies about it—

AGNES. Don't be a fool, nobody will say anything.

SARAH. I will. I want everyone to know—

AGNES. Shut up; pull yourself together; don't you suppose this hits me as bad as you? You don't know. . . . He was locked in here and he killed himself. We came down—we three together, and found the door locked. Get that straight, somebody's got to use their head—take that telephone and call up somebody—Take the telephone, Raymond— [MERRITT *helplessly picks up telephone*] Get the police; tell 'em exactly what I say; take hold of that phone and call them—Tell the police it's a suicide, tell 'em he had a nervous breakdown . . . too much work . . . too ambitious. . . .

[*Her voice goes on as the curtain falls*]

THE MOON OF THE CARIBBEES¹

by Eugene O'Neill

CHARACTERS

| | | |
|-------------------------|---|--|
| YANK | } | <i>Seamen of the British tramp steamer, Glencairn.</i> |
| DRISCOLL | | |
| OLSON | | |
| DAVIS | | |
| COCKY | | |
| SMITTY | | |
| PAUL | | |
| LAMPS, the lamptimmer. | | |
| CHIPS, the carpenter. | | |
| OLD TOM, the donkeyman. | | |
| BIG FRANK | } | <i>Firemen on the Glencairn.</i> |
| DICK | | |
| MAX | | |
| PADDY | | |
| BELLA | } | <i>West Indian Negresses.</i> |
| SUSIE | | |
| VIOLET | | |
| PEARL | | |
| THE FIRST MATE | | |

Two other seamen—SCOTTY AND IVAN—and several other members of the stoke-hole-engine-room crew.

SCENE: *A forward section of the main deck of the British tramp Steamer GLENCAIRN, at anchor off an island in the West Indies. The full moon, half-way up the sky, throws a clear light on the deck. The sea is calm and the ship motionless.*

On the left two of the derrick booms of the foremast jut out at an angle of forty-five degrees, black against the sky. In the rear the dark outline of the port bulwark is sharply defined against a distant strip of coral beach, white in the moonlight, fringed with coco palms whose tops rise clear of the horizon. On the right is the forecastle with an open doorway in the center leading to the seamen's and firemen's compartments. On either side of the doorway are two closed doors opening on the quarters of the Bo'sun, the ship's carpenter,

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the messroom steward, and the donkeyman—what might be called the petty officers of the ship. Near each bulwark there is also a short stairway, like a section of fire escape, leading up to the forecastle head (the top of the fore-castle)—the edge of which can be seen on the right.

In the center of the deck, and occupying most of the space, is the large, raised square of the number one hatch, covered with canvas, battened down for the night.

A melancholy negro chant, faint and far-off, drifts, crooning, over the water.

Most of the seamen and firemen are reclining or sitting on the hatch. PAUL is leaning against the port bulwark, the upper part of his stocky figure outlined against the sky. SMITTY and COCKY are sitting on the edge of the forecastle head with their legs dangling over. Nearly all are smoking pipes or cigarettes. The majority are dressed in patched suits of dungaree. Quite a few are in their bare feet and some of them, especially the firemen, have nothing on but a pair of pants and an undershirt. A good many wear caps.

There is the low murmur of different conversations going on in the separate groups as the curtain rises. This is followed by a sudden silence in which the singing from the land can be plainly heard.

DRISCOLL [*A powerfully built Irishman who is sitting on the edge of the hatch, front—irritably*]. Will ye listen to them naygurs? I wonder now, do they call that keenin' a song?

SMITTY [*A young Englishman with a blond mustache. He is sitting on the forecastle head looking out over the water with his chin supported on his hands*]. It doesn't make a chap feel very cheerful, does it? [*He sighs*]

COCKY [*A wizened runt of a man with a straggling gray mustache—slapping SMITTY on the back*]. Cheero, ole dear! Down't be ser dawhn in the marf, Duke. She loves yer.

SMITTY [*Gloomily*]. Shut up, Cocky! [*He turns away from cocky and falls to dreaming again, staring toward the spot on shore where the singing seems to come from*]

BIG FRANK [*A huge fireman sprawled out on the right of the hatch—waving a hand toward the land*]. They bury somebody—py chimney Christmas, I tink so from way it sound.

YANK [*A rather good-looking rough who is sitting beside DRISCOLL*]. What d'yuh mean, bury? They don't plant 'em down here, Dutchy. They eat 'em to save fun'ral expenses. I guess this guy went down the wrong way an' they got indigestion.

COCKY. Indigestion! Ho yus, not 'arf! Down't yer know as them blokes 'as two stomachs like a bleedin' camel?

DAVIS [*A short, dark man seated on the right of the hatch*]. An' you seen the two, I s'pect, ain't you?

COCKY [*Scornfully*]. Down't be showin' yer igerance be tryin' to make a mock o' me what has seen more o' the world than yeself ever will.

MAX [*A Swedish fireman—from the rear of hatch*]. Spin dat yarn, Cocky.

COCKY. It's Gawd's troof, what I tole yer. I 'eard it from a bloke what was captured pris'ner by 'em in the Solomon Islands. Shipped wiv 'im one voyage. 'Twas a rare treat to 'ear 'im tell what 'appened to 'im among 'em. [*Musingly*] 'E was a funny bird, 'e was—ailed from Mile End, 'e did.

DRISCOLL [*With a snort*]. Another lyin' Cockney, the loike av yourself!

LAMPS [*A fat Swede who is sitting on a camp stool in front of his door talking with CHIPS*]. Where you meet up with him, Cocky?

CHIPS [*A lanky Scotchman—derisively*]. In New Guinea, I'll lay my oath!

COCKY [*Defiantly*]. Yus! It was in New Guinea, time I was shipwrecked there. [*There is a perfect storm of groans and laughter at this speech*]

YANK [*Getting up*]. Yuh know what we said yuh'd get if yuh sprung any of that lyin' New Guinea dope on us again, don't yuh? Close that trap if yuh don't want a duckin' over the side.

COCKY. Ow, I was on'y tryin' to edicate yer a bit. [*He sinks into dignified silence*]

YANK [*Nodding toward the shore*]. Don't yuh know this is the West Indies, yuh crazy mut? There ain't no cannibals here. They're only common niggers.

DRISCOLL [*Irritably*]. Whativer they are, the divil take their cryin'. It's enough to give a man the jigs listenin' to 'em.

YANK [*With a grin*]. What's the matter, Drisc? Yuh're as sore as a boil about somethin'.

DRISCOLL. I'm dyin' wid impatience to have a dhrink; an' that blarsted bumboat naygur woman took her oath she'd bring back rum enough for the lot av us whin she came back on board to-night.

BIG FRANK [*Overhearing this—in a loud eager voice*]. You say the bumboat voman vill bring booze?

DRISCOLL [*Sarcastically*]. That's right—tell the Old Man about ut, an' the Mate, too. [*All of the crew have edged nearer to DRISCOLL and are listening to the conversation with an air of suppressed excitement. DRISCOLL lowers his voice impressively and addresses them all*] She said she cud snake ut on board in the bottoms av thim baskets av fruit they're goin' to bring wid 'em to sell to us for'ard.

THE DONKEYMAN [*An old gray-headed man with a kindly, wrinkled face. He is sitting on a camp stool in front of his door, right front*]. She'll be bringin' some black women with her this time—or times has changed since I put in here last.

DRISCOLL. She said she wud—two or three—more, maybe, I dunno. [*This announcement is received with great enthusiasm by all hands*]

COCKY. Wot a bloody lark!

OLSON. Py yingo, we have one hell of a time!

DRISCOLL [*Warningly*]. Remimber ye must be quiet about ut, ye scuts—wid the dhrink, I mane—ivin if the bo'sun is ashore. The Old Man ordered her to bring no booze on board or he wudn't buy a thing off av her for the ship.

PADDY [*A squat, ugly Liverpool Irishman*]. To the divil wid him!

BIG FRANK [*Turning on him*]. Shud up, you tamn fool, Paddy! You vant make trouble? [*To DRISCOLL*] You und me, ve keep dem quiet, Drisc.

DRISCOLL. Right ye are, Dutchy. I'll split the skull av the first wan av ye starts to foight. [*Three bells are heard striking*]

DAVIS. Three bells. When's she comin', Drisc?

DRISCOLL. She'll be here any minute now, surely. [*To PAUL, who has returned to his position by the bulwark after hearing DRISCOLL's news*] D'you see 'em comin', Paul?

PAUL. I don't see anyting like bumboat. [*They all set themselves to wait, lighting pipes, cigarettes, and making themselves comfortable. There is a silence broken only by the mournful singing of the negroes on shore*]

SMITTY [*Slowly—with a trace of melancholy*]. I wish they'd stop that song. It makes you think of—well—things you ought to forget. Rummy go, what?

COCKY [*Slapping him on the back*]. Cheero, ole love! We'll be 'avin our rum in arf a mo', Duke. [*He comes down to the deck, leaving SMITTY alone on the forecastle head*]

BIG FRANK. Sing someting, Drisc. Den ve don't hear dot yelling.

DAVIS. Give us a chanty, Drisc.

PADDY. Wan all av us knows.

MAX. We all sing in on chorus.

OLSON. "Rio Grande," Drisc.

BIG FRANK. No, ve don't know dot. Sing "Viskey Johnny."

CHIPS. "Flyin' Cloud."

COCKY. Now! Guv us "Maid o' Amsterdam."

LAMPS. "Santa Anna" iss good one.

DRISCOLL. Shut your mouths, all av you. [*Scornfully*] A chanty is ut ye want? I'll bet me whole pay day there's not wan in the crowd 'ceptin' Yank here, an' Ollie, an' meself, an' Lamps an' Cocky, maybe, wud be sailors enough to know the main from the mizzen on a windjammer. Ye've heard the names av chanties but divil a note av the tune or a loine av the words do ye know. There's hardly a rale deep-water sailor lift on the seas, more's the pity.

YANK. Give us "Blow the Man Down." We all know some of that.

[*A chorus of assenting voices: Yes!—Righto!—Let 'er drive! Start 'er, Drisc! etc.*]

DRISCOLL. Come in then, all av ye. [*He sings:*]

As I was a-roamin' down Paradise Street—

ALL. Wa-a-ay, blow the man down!

DRISCOLL. As I was a-roamin' down Paradise Street—

ALL. Give us some time to blow the man down!

CHORUS

Blow the man down, boys, oh, blow the man down!

Wa-a-ay, blow the man down!

As I was a-roamin' down Paradise Street—

Give us some time to blow the man down!

DRISCOLL. A pretty young maiden I chanced for to meet.

ALL. Wa-a-ay, blow the man down!

DRISCOLL. A pretty young maiden I chanced for to meet.

ALL. Give us some time to blow the man down!

CHORUS

Blow the man down, boys, oh, blow the man down!

Wa-a-ay, blow the man down!

A pretty young maiden I chanced for to meet.

Give us some time to blow the man down!

PAUL [*Just as DRISCOLL is clearing his throat preparatory to starting the next verse*]. Hay, Drisc! Here she come, I tink. Some bumboat comin' dis way.

[*They all rush to the side and look toward the land*]

YANK. There's five or six of them in it—and they paddle like skirts.

DRISCOLL [*Wildly elated*]. Hurroo, ye scuts! 'Tis thim right enough. [*He does a few jig steps on the deck*]

OLSON [*After a pause during which all are watching the approaching boat*]. Py yingo, I see six in boat, yes, sir.

DAVIS. I kin make out the baskets. See 'em there amidships?

BIG FRANK. Vot kind booze dey bring—viskey?

DRISCOLL. Rum, foine West Indy rum wid a kick in ut loike a mule's hoind leg.

LAMPS. Maybe she don't bring any; maybe skipper scare her.

DRISCOLL. Don't be throwin' cold water, Lamps. I'll skin her black hoide off av her if she goes back on her worrd.

YANK. Here they come. Listen to 'em gigglin'. [*Calling*] Oh, you kiddo!

[*The sound of women's voices can be heard talking and laughing*]

DRISCOLL [*Calling*]. Is ut you, Mrs. Old Black Joe?

A WOMAN'S VOICE. Ullo, Mike! [*There is loud feminine laughter at this retort*]

DRISCOLL. Shake a leg an' come aboard thim.

THE WOMAN'S VOICE. We're a-comin'.

DRISCOLL. Come on, Yank. You an' me'd best be goin' to give 'em a hand wid their truck. 'Twill put 'em in good spirits.

COCKY [*As they start off left*]. Ho, you ain't 'arf a fox, Drisc. Down't drink it all afore we sees it.

DRISCOLL [*Over his shoulder*]. You'll be havin' yours, me sonny bye, don't fret. [*He and YANK go off left*]

COCKY [*Licking his lips*]. Gawd blimey, I can do wiv a wet.

DAVIS. Me, too!

CHIPS. I'll bet there ain't none of us'll let any go to waste.

BIG FRANK. I could trink a whole barrel mineself, py chimminy Christmas!

COCKY. I 'opes all the gels ain't as bloomin' ugly as 'er. Looked like a bloody organ-grinder's monkey, she did. Gawd, I couldn't put up wiv the likes of 'er!

PADDY—Ye'll be lucky if any of thim looks at ye, ye squint-eyed runt.

COCKY. [*Angrily*]. Ho, yus? You ain't no bleedin' beauty prize yeself, me man. A 'airy ape, I calls yer.

PADDY [*Walking toward him—truculently*]. Whot's thot? Say ut again if ye dare.

COCKY [*His hand on his sheath knife—snarling*]. 'Airy ape! That's wot I says! [*PADDY tries to reach him but the others keep them apart*]

BIG FRANK [*Pushing PADDY back*]. Vot's the matter mit you, Paddy. Don't you hear vat Driscoll say—no fighting?

PADDY [*Grumblingly*]. I don't take no back talk from that deck-scrubbin' shrimp.

COCKY. Blarsted coal-puncher!

[*DRISCOLL appears wearing a broad grin of satisfaction. The fight is immediately forgotten by the crowd who gather around him with exclamations of eager curiosity. How is it, Drisc? Any luck? Vot she bring, Drisc? Where's the gels? etc.*]

DRISCOLL [*With an apprehensive glance back at the bridge*]. Not so loud, for the love av hivin! [*The clamor dies down*] Yis, she has ut wid her. She'll be here in a minute wid a pint bottle or two for each wan av ye—three shillin's a bottle. So don't be impashunt.

COCKY [*Indignantly*]. Three bob! The bloody cow!

SMITTY [*With an ironic smile*]. Grand larceny, by God! [*They all turn and look up at him, surprised to hear him speak*]

OLSON. Py yingo, we don't pay so much.

BIG FRANK. Tamn black tief!

PADDY. We'll take ut away from her and give her nothin'.

THE CROWD [*Growling*]. Dirty thief! Dot's right! Give her nothin'! Not a bloomin' 'apenny! etc.

DRISCOLL [*Grinning*]. Ye can take ut or lave ut, me sonny byes. [*He casts a glance in the direction of the bridge and then reaches inside his shirt and pulls out a pint bottle*] 'Tis foine rum, the rale stuff. [*He drinks*] I slipped this wan out av wan av the baskets whin they wasn't lookin'. [*He hands the bottle to OLSON who is nearest him*] Here ye are, Ollie. Take a small sup an' pass ut to the nixt. 'Tisn't much but 'twill serve to take the black taste out av your mouths if ye go aisly wid ut. An' there's buckets more av ut comin'.

[The bottle passes from hand to hand, each man taking a sip and smacking his lips with a deep "Aa-ah" of satisfaction]

DAVIS. Where's she now, Drisc?

DRISCOLL. Up havin' a worrd wid the skipper, makin' arrangements about the money, I s'pose.

DAVIS. An' where's the other gels?

DRISCOLL. Wid her. There's foive av thim she took aboard—two swate little slips av things, near as white as you an' me are, for that gray-whiskered auld fool, an' the mates—an' the engineers too, maybe. The rist av thim'll be comin' for'ard whin she comes.

COCKY. 'E ain't 'arf a funny ole bird, the skipper. Gawd blimey! 'Member when we sailed from 'ome 'ow 'e stands on the bridge lookin' like a bloody ole sky pilot? An' 'is missus dawn on the bloomin' dock 'owlin' fit to kill 'erself? An' 'is kids 'owlin' an' wavin' their 'andkerchiefs? *[With great moral indignation]* An' 'ere 'e is makin' up to a bleedin' nigger! There's a captain for yer! Gawd blimey! Bloody crab, I calls 'im!

DRISCOLL. Shut up, ye insect! Sure, it's not you should be talkin', an' you wid a woman an' childer weepin' for ye in iviry divil's port in the wide worrld, if we can believe your own tale av ut.

COCKY *[Still indignant]*. I ain't no bloomin' captain, I ain't. I ain't got no missus—reg'lar married, I means. I ain't—

BIG FRANK *[Putting a huge paw over Cocky's mouth]*. You ain't going talk so much, you hear? *[Cocky wriggles away from him]* Say, Drisc, how ve pay dis voman for booze? Ve ain't got no cash.

DRISCOLL. It's aisy enough. Each girl'll have a slip av paper wid her an' whin you buy anythin' you write ut down and the price beside ut and sign your name. If ye can't write have some one who can do ut for ye. An' rimimber this: Whin ye buy a bottle av dhrink or *[With a wink]* somethin' else forbid, ye must write down tobaccy or fruit or somethin' the loike av that. Whin she laves the skipper'll pay what's owin' on the paper an' take ut out av your pay. Is ut clear to ye now?

ALL. Yes—Clear as day—Aw right, Drisc—Righto—Sure. etc.

DRISCOLL. An' don't forget what I said about bein' quiet wid the dhrink, or the Mate'll be down on our necks an' spile the fun. *[A chorus of assent]*

DAVIS *[Looking aft]*. Ain't this them comin'?

[They all look in that direction. The silly laughter of a woman is heard]

DRISCOLL. Look at Yank, wud ye, wid his arm around the middle av wan av thim. That lad's not wastin' any toime.

[The four women enter from the left, giggling and whispering to each other. The first three carry baskets on their heads. The youngest and best-looking comes last. YANK has his arm about her waist and is carrying her basket in his other hand. All four are distinct negro types. They wear light-colored, loose-fitting clothes and have bright bandana handkerchiefs on their heads. They put down their baskets]

on the hatch and sit down beside them. The men crowd around, grinning]

BELLA [*She is the oldest, stoutest, and homeliest of the four—grinning back at them*]. Ullo, boys.

THE OTHER GIRLS. 'Ullo, boys.

THE MEN. Hello, yourself—Evenin'—Hello—How are you? etc.

BELLA [*Gemally*]. Hope you had a nice voyage. My name's Bella, this here's Susie, yander's Violet, and her there [*Pointing to the girl with YANK*] is Pearl. Now we all knows each other.

PADDY [*Roughly*]. Never mind the girls. Where's the dhrink?

BELLA [*Tartly*]. You're a hawg, ain't you? Don't talk so loud or you don't git any—you nor no man. Think I wants the ole captain to put me off the ship, do you?

YANK. Yes, nix on hollerin', you! D'yuh wanta queer all of us?

BELLA [*Casting a quick glance over her shoulder*]. Here! Some of you big strapping boys sit back of us on the hatch there so's them officers can't see what we're doin'. [*DRISCOLL and several of the others sit and stand in back of the girls on the hatch. BELLA turns to DRISCOLL*] Did you tell 'em they gotter sign for what they gits—and *how* to sign?

DRISCOLL. I did—what's your name again—oh, yis—Bella, darlin'.

BELLA. Then it's all right; but you boys has gotter go inside the fo'castle when you gits your bottle. No drinkin' out here on deck. I ain't takin' no chances. [*An impatient murmur of assent goes up from the crowd*] Ain't that right, Mike?

DRISCOLL. Right as rain, darlin'. [*BIG FRANK leans over and says something to him in a low voice. DRISCOLL laughs and slaps his thigh*] Listen, Bella, I've somethin' to ask ye for my little friend here who's bashful. Ut has to do wid the ladies so I'd best be whisperin' ut to ye meself to kape them from blushin'. [*He leans over and asks her a question*]

BELLA [*Firmly*]. Four shillin's.

DRISCOLL [*Laughing*]. D'you hear that, all av ye? Four shillin's ut is.

PADDY [*Angrily*]. To hell wid this talkin'. I want a dhrink.

BELLA. Is everything all right, Mike?

DRISCOLL [*After a look back at the bridge*]. Sure. Let her droive!

BELLA. All right, girls. [*The girls reach down in their baskets in under the fruit which is on top and each pulls out a pint bottle. Four of the men crowd up and take the bottles*] Fetch a light, Lamps, that's a good boy. [*LAMPS goes to his room and returns with a candle. This is passed from one girl to another as the men sign the sheets of paper for their bottles*] Don't you boys forget to mark down cigarettes or tobacco or fruit, remember! Three shillin's is the price. Take it into the fo'castle. For Gawd's sake, don't stand out here drinkin' in the moonlight. [*The four go into the forecandle. Four more take their places. PADDY plants himself in front of PEARL who is sitting by YANK with his arm still around her*]

PADDY [*Gruffly*]. Gimme thot! [*She holds out a bottle which he snatches from her hand. He turns to go away*]

YANK [*Sharply*]. Here, you! Where d'yuh get that stuff? You ain't signed for that yet.

PADDY [*Sullenly*]. I can't write me name.

YANK. Then I'll write it for yuh. [*He takes the paper from Pearl and writes*] There ain't goin' to be no welchin' on little Bright Eyes here—not when I'm around, see? Ain't I right, kiddo?

PEARL [*With a grin*]. Yes, suh.

BELLA [*Seeing all four are served*]. Take it into the fo'castle, boys. [*PADDY defiantly raises his bottle and gulps down a drink in the full moonlight. BELLA sees him*] Look at 'im! Look at the dirty swine! [*PADDY slouches into the forecastle*] Wants to git me in trouble. That settles it! We all got to git inside, boys, where we won't git caught. Come on, girls. [*The girls pick up their baskets and follow BELLA. YANK and PEARL are the last to reach the doorway. She lingers behind him, her eyes fixed on SMITTY, who is still sitting on the forecastle head, his chin on his hands, staring off into vacancy*]

PEARL [*Waving a hand to attract his attention*]. Come ahn in, pretty boy. Ah likes you.

SMITTY [*Coldly*]. Yes; I want to buy a bottle, please.

[*He goes down the steps and follows her into the forecastle. No one remains on deck but the DONKEYMAN, who sits smoking his pipe in front of his door. There is the subdued babble of voices from the crowd inside but the mournful cadence of the song from the shore can again be faintly heard. SMITTY reappears and closes the door to the forecastle after him. He shudders and shakes his shoulders as if flinging off something which disgusted him. Then he lifts the bottle which is in his hand to his lips and gulps down a long drink. THE DONKEYMAN watches him impassively. SMITTY sits down on the hatch facing him. Now that the closed door has shut off nearly all the noise the singing from shore comes clearly over the moonlit water*]

SMITTY [*Listening to it for a moment*]. Damn that song of theirs. [*He takes another big drink*] What do you say, Donk?

THE DONKEYMAN [*Quietly*]. Seems nice an' sleepy-like.

SMITTY [*With a hard laugh*]. Sleepy! If I listened to it long—sober—I'd never go to sleep.

THE DONKEYMAN. 'Tain't sich bad music, is it? Sounds kinder pretty to me—low an' mournful—same as listenin' to the organ outside o' church of a Sunday.

SMITTY [*With a touch of impatience*]. I didn't mean it was bad music. It isn't. It's the beastly memories the damn thing brings up—for some reason. [*He takes another pull at the bottle*]

THE DONKEYMAN. Ever hear it before?

SMITTY. No; never in my life. It's just a something about the rotten thing which makes me think of—well—oh, the devil! [*He forces a laugh*]

THE DONKEYMAN [*Spitting placidly*]. Queer things, mem'ries. I ain't ever been bothered much by 'em.

SMITTY [*Looking at him fixedly for a moment—with quiet scorn*]. No, you wouldn't be.

THE DONKEYMAN. Not that I ain't had my share o' things goin' wrong; but I puts 'em out o' me mind, like, an' fergits 'em.

SMITTY. But suppose you couldn't put them out of your mind? Suppose they haunted you when you were awake and when you were asleep—what then?

THE DONKEYMAN [*Quietly*]. I'd git drunk, same's you're doin'.

SMITTY [*With a harsh laugh*]. Good advice. [*He takes another drink. He is beginning to show the effects of the liquor. His face is flushed and he talks rather wildly*] We're poor little lambs who have lost our way, eh, Donk? Damned from here to eternity, what? God have mercy on such as we! True, isn't it, Donk?

THE DONKEYMAN. Maybe; I dunno. [*After a slight pause*] Whatever set you goin' to sea? You ain't made for it.

SMITTY [*Laughing wildly*]. My old friend in the bottle here, Donk.

THE DONKEYMAN. I done my share o' drinkin' in my time. [*Regretfully*] Them was good times, those days. Can't hold up under drink no more. Doctor told me I'd got to stop or die. [*He spits contentedly*] So I stops.

SMITTY [*With a foolish smile*]. Then I'll drink one for you. Here's your health, old top! [*He drinks*]

THE DONKEYMAN [*After a pause*]. S'pose there's a gel mixed up in it someplace, ain't there?

SMITTY [*Stuffy*]. What makes you think so?

THE DONKEYMAN. Always is when a man lets music bother 'im. [*After a few puffs at his pipe*] An' she said she threw you over 'cause you was drunk; an' you said you was drunk 'cause she threw you over. [*He spits leisurely*] Queer thing, love, ain't it?

SMITTY [*Rising to his feet with drunken dignity*]. I'll trouble you not to pry into my affairs, Donkeyman.

THE DONKEYMAN [*Unmoved*]. That's everybody's affair, what I said. I been through it many's the time. [*Genially*] I always hit 'em a whack on the ear an' went out and got drunker'n ever. When I come home again they always had somethin' special nice cooked fur me to eat. [*Puffing at his pipe*] That's the on'y way to fix 'em when they gits on their high horse. I don't s'pose you ever tried that?

SMITTY [*Pompously*]. Gentlemen don't hit women.

THE DONKEYMAN [*Placidly*]. No; that's why they has mem'ries when they hears music.

[SMITTY does not deign to reply to this but sinks into a scornful silence. DAVIS and the girl VIOLET come out of the forecastle and close the door behind them. He is staggering a bit and she is laughing shrilly]

DAVIS [*Turning to the left*]. This way, Rose, or Pansy, or Jessamine, or black Tulip, or Violet, or whatever the hell flower your name is. No one'll see us back here. [*They go off left*]

THE DONKEYMAN. There's love at first sight for you—an' plenty more o' the same in the fo'c's'tle. No mem'ries jined with that.

SMITTY [*Really repelled*]. Shut up, Donk. You're disgusting. [*He takes a long drink*]

THE DONKEYMAN [*Philosophically*]. All depends on how you was brung up, I s'pose.

[PEARL comes out of the forecandle. There is a roar of voices from inside. She shuts the door behind her, sees SMITTY on the hatch, and comes over and sits beside him and puts her arm over his shoulder]

THE DONKEYMAN [*Chuckling*]. There's love for you, Duke.

PEARL [*Patting SMITTY's face with her hand*]. 'Ullo, pretty boy. [*SMITTY pushes her hand away coldly*] What you doin' out here all alone by yourself?

SMITTY [*With a twisted grin*]. Thinking and,—[*He indicates the bottle in his hand*—drinking to stop thinking. [*He drinks and laughs maudlinly. The bottle is three-quarters empty*]

PEARL. You oughtn't drink so much, pretty boy. Don' you know dat? You have big, big headache come mawnin'.

SMITTY [*Dryly*]. Indeed?

PEARL. Tha's true. Ah knows what Ah say. [*Cooingly*] Why you run 'way from me, pretty boy? Ah likes you. Ah don' like them other fellahs. They act too rough. You ain't rough. You're a genelman. Ah knows. Ah can tell a genelman fahs Ah can see 'im.

SMITTY. Thank you for the compliment; but you're wrong, you see. I'm merely—a ranker. [*He adds bitterly*] And a rotter.

PEARL [*Patting his arm*]. No, you ain't. Ah knows better. You're a genelman. [*Insinuatingly*] Ah wouldn't have nothin' to do with them other men, but [*She smiles at him enticingly*] you is diff'rent. [*He pushes her away from him disgustedly. She pouts*] Don' you like me, pretty boy?

SMITTY [*A bit ashamed*]. I beg your pardon. I didn't mean to be rude, you know, really. [*His politeness is drunkenly exaggerated*] I'm a bit off color.

PEARL [*Brightening up*]. Den you do like me—little ways?

SMITTY [*Carelessly*]. Yes, yes, why shouldn't I? [*He suddenly laughs wildly and puts his arm around her waist and presses her to him*] Why not?

[*He pulls his arm back quickly with a shudder of disgust, and takes a drink. PEARL looks at him curiously, puzzled by his strange actions. The door from the forecandle is kicked open and YANK comes out. The uproar of shouting, laughing and singing voices has increased in violence. YANK staggers over toward SMITTY and PEARL*]

YANK [*Blinking at them*]. What the hell—oh, it's you, Smitty the Duke. I was goin' to turn one loose on the jaw of any guy'd cop my dame, but seein'

it's you—— [*Sentimentally*] Pals is pals and any pal of mine c'n have anythin' I got, see? [*Holding out his hand*] Shake, Duke. [*SMITTY takes his hand and he pumps it up and down*] You'n me's frens. Ain't I right?

SMITTY. Right it is, Yank. But you're wrong about this girl. She isn't with me. She was just going back to the fo'c's'tle to you. [*PEARL looks at him with hatred gathering in her eyes*]

YANK. Tha' right?

SMITTY. On my word!

YANK [*Grabbing her arm*]. Come on then, you, Pearl! Le's have a drink with the bunch. [*He pulls her to the entrance where she shakes off his hand long enough to turn on SMITTY furiously*]

PEARL. You swine! You can go to hell! [*She goes in the forecandle, slamming the door*]

THE DONKEYMAN [*Spitting calmly*]. There's love for you. They're all the same—white, brown, yellor 'n' black. A whack on the ear's the only thing'll learn 'em.

[*SMITTY makes no reply but laughs harshly and takes another drink; then sits staring before him, the almost empty bottle tightly clutched in one hand. There is an increase in volume of the muffled clamor from the forecandle and a moment later the door is thrown open and the whole mob, led by DRISCOLL, pours out on deck. All of them are very drunk and several of them carry bottles in their hands. BELLA is the only one of the women who is absolutely sober. She tries in vain to keep the men quiet. PEARL drinks from YANK's bottle every moment or so, laughing shrilly, and leaning against YANK, whose arm is about her waist. PAUL comes out last carrying an accordion. He staggers over and stands on top of the hatch, his instrument under his arm*]

DRISCOLL. Play us a dance, ye square-head swab!—a rale, Godforsaken son av a turkey trot wid guts to ut.

YANK. Straight from the old Barbary Coast in Frisco!

PAUL. I don' know. I try. [*He commences tuning up*]

YANK. Ataboy! Let 'er rip!

[*DAVIS and VIOLET come back and join the crowd. THE DONKEYMAN looks on them all with a detached, indulgent air. SMITTY stares before him and does not seem to know there is any one on deck but himself*]

BIG FRANK. Dance? I don't dance. I trink! [*He suits the action to the word and roars with meaningless laughter*]

DRISCOLL. Git out av the way thin, ye big hulk, an' give us some room.

[*BIG FRANK sits down on the hatch, right. All of the others who are not going to dance either follow his example or lean against the port bulwark*]

BELLA [*On the verge of tears at her inability to keep them in the forecandle or make them be quiet now they are out*]. For Gawd's sake, boys, don't shout so loud! Want to git me in trouble?

DRISCOLL [*Grabbing her*]. Dance wid me, me cannibal quane. [*Some one drops a bottle on deck and it smashes*]

BELLA [*Hysterically*]. There they goes! There they goes! Captain'll hear that! Oh, my Lawd!

DRISCOLL. Be damned to him! Here's the music! Off ye go!

[*PAUL starts playing "You Great Big Beautiful Doll" with a note left out every now and then. The four couples commence dancing—a jerk-shouldered version of the old Turkey Trot as it was done in the sailor-town dives, made more grotesque by the fact that all the couples are drunk and keep lurching into each other every moment. Two of the men start dancing together, intentionally bumping into the others. YANK and PEARL come around in front of SMITTY and, as they pass him, PEARL slaps him across the side of the face with all her might and laughs viciously. He jumps to his feet with his fists clenched but sees who hit him and sits down again smiling bitterly. YANK laughs boisterously*]

YANK. Wow; Some wallop! One on you, Duke.

DRISCOLL [*Hurling his cap at PAUL*]. Faster, ye toad! [*PAUL makes frantic efforts to speed up and the music suffers in the process*]

BELLA [*Puffing*]. Let me go. I'm wore out with you steppin' on my toes, you clumsy Mick. [*She struggles but DRISCOLL holds her tight*]

DRISCOLL. God blarst you for havin' such big feet, thin. Aisy, aisy, Mrs. Old Black Joe! 'Tis dancin'll take the blubber off ye.

[*He whirls her around the deck by main force. COCKY, with SUSIE, is dancing near the hatch, right, when PADDY, who is sitting on the edge with BIG FRANK, sticks his foot out and the wavering couple stumble over it and fall flat on the deck. A roar of laughter goes up. COCKY rises to his feet, his face livid with rage, and springs at PADDY, who promptly knocks him down. DRISCOLL hits PADDY and BIG FRANK hits DRISCOLL. In a flash a wholesale fight has broken out and the deck is a surging crowd of drink-maddened men hitting out at each other indiscriminately, although the general idea seems to be a battle between seamen and firemen. The women shriek and take refuge on top of the hatch, where they huddle in a frightened group. Finally there is the flash of a knife held high in the moonlight and a loud yell of pain*]

DAVIS [*Somewhere in the crowd*]. Here's the Mate comin'! Let's git out o' this!

[*There is a general rush for the forecabin. In a moment there is no one left on deck but the little group of women on the hatch; SMITTY, still dazedly rubbing his cheek; THE DONKEYMAN quietly smoking on his stool; and YANK and DRISCOLL, their faces battered up considerably, their undershirts in shreds, bending over the still form of PADDY, which lies stretched out on the deck between them. In the silence the mournful chant from the shore creeps slowly out to the ship*]

DRISCOLL [*Quickly—in a low voice*]. Who knoifed him?

YANK [*Stupidly*]. I didn't see it. How do I know? Cocky, I'll bet.

[*The FIRST MATE enters from the left. He is a tall, strongly-built man dressed in a plain blue uniform*]

THE MATE [*Angrily*]. What's all this noise about? [*He sees the man lying on the deck*] Hello! What's this? [*He bends down on one knee beside PADDY*]

DRISCOLL [*Stammering*]. All av us—was in a bit av a harmless foight, sir,—an'—I dunno— [THE MATE rolls PADDY over and sees a knife wound on his shoulder]

THE MATE. Knifed, by God. [*He takes an electric flash from his pocket and examines the cut*] Lucky it's only a flesh wound. He must have hit his head on deck when he fell. That's what knocked him out. This is only a scratch. Take him aft and I'll bandage him up.

DRISCOLL. Yis, sor.

[*They take PADDY by the shoulders and feet and carry him off left. The MATE looks up and sees the women on the hatch for the first time*]

THE MATE [*Surprised*]. Hello! [*He walks over to them*] Go to the cabin and get your money and clear off. If I had my way, you'd never— [*His foot hits a bottle. He stoops down and picks it up and smells of it*] Rum, by God! So that's the trouble! I thought their breaths smelled damn queer. [*To the women, harshly*] You needn't go to the skipper for any money. You won't get any. That'll teach you to smuggle rum on a ship and start a riot.

BELLA. But, Mister—

THE MATE [*Sternly*]. You know the agreement—rum—no money.

BELLA [*Indignantly*]. Honest to Gawd, Mister, I never brung no—

THE MATE [*Fiercely*]. You're a liar! And none of your lip or I'll make a complaint ashore tomorrow and have you locked up.

BELLA [*Subdued*]. Please, Mister—

THE MATE. Clear out of this, now! Not another word out of you! Tumble over the side damn quick! The two others are waiting for you. Hop, now!

[*They walk quickly—almost run—off to the left. THE MATE follows them, nodding to THE DONKEYMAN, and ignoring the oblivious SMITTY*]

[*There is absolute silence on the ship for a few moments. The melancholy song of the negroes drifts crooning over the water. SMITTY listens to it intently for a time; then sighs heavily, a sigh that is half a sob*]

SMITTY. God! [*He drinks the last drop in the bottle and throws it behind him on the hatch*]

THE DONKEYMAN [*Spitting tranquilly*]. More mem'ries? [SMITTY does not answer him. The ship's bell tolls four bells. THE DONKEYMAN knocks out his pipe] I think I'll turn in. [*He opens the door to his cabin, but turns to look at SMITTY—kindly*] You can't hear it in the fo'c's'tle—the music, I mean

—an' there'll likely be more drink in there, too. Good night. [*He goes in and shuts the door*]

SMITTY. Good night, Donk.

[*He gets wearily to his feet and walks with bowed shoulders, staggering a bit, to the forecastle entrance and goes in. There is silence for a second or so, broken only by the haunted, saddened voice of that brooding music, faint and far-off, like the mood of the moonlight made audible*]

POEMS

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NARRATIVE POEMS

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Michael

A PASTORAL POEM

IF FROM the public way you turn
your steps
Up the tumultuous brook of
Greenhead Ghyll,
You will suppose that with an upright
path
Your feet must struggle; in such bold
ascent
The pastoral mountains front you, face
to face. 5
But, courage! for around that boister-
ous brook
The mountains have all opened out
themselves,
And made a hidden valley of their
own.
No habitation can be seen; but they
Who journey thither find themselves
alone 10
With a few sheep, with rocks and
stones, and kites
That overhead are sailing in the sky.
It is in truth an utter solitude;
Nor should I have made mention of
this Dell
But for one object which you might
pass by, 15
Might see and notice not. Beside the
brook
Appears a straggling heap of unhewn
stones!
And to that simple object appertains
A story—unenriched with strange
events,
Yet not unfit, I deem, for the fireside,
Or for the summer shade. It was the
first 21

Of those domestic tales that spake to
me
Of shepherds, dwellers in the valleys,
men
Whom I already loved; not verily
For their own sakes, but for the fields
and hills 25
Where was their occupation and
abode.
And hence this Tale, while I was yet
a Boy
Careless of books, yet having felt the
power
Of Nature, by the gentle agency
Of natural objects, led me on to
feel 30
For passions that were not my own,
and think
(At random and imperfectly indeed)
On man, the heart of man, and human
life.
Therefore, although it be a history
Homely and rude, I will relate the
same 35
For the delight of a few natural
hearts;
And, with yet fonder feeling, for the
sake
Of youthful Poets, who among these
hills
Will be my second self when I am
gone.

Upon the forest-side in Grasmere
Vale 40
There dwelt a Shepherd, Michael was
his name;
An old man, stout of heart, and strong
of limb.
His bodily frame had been from youth
to age

Of an unusual strength: his mind was
 keen,
 Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs,
 And in his shepherd's calling he was
 prompt 46
 And watchful more than ordinary
 men.
 Hence had he learned the meaning of
 all winds,
 Of blasts of every tone; and often-
 times,
 When others heeded not, He heard
 the South 50
 Make subterraneous music, like the
 noise
 Of bagpipers on distant Highland
 hills.
 The Shepherd, at such warning, of his
 flock
 Bethought him, and he to himself
 would say,
 "The winds are now devising work
 for me!" 55
 And, truly, at all times, the storm, that
 drives
 The traveler to a shelter, summoned
 him
 Up to the mountains: he had been
 alone
 Amid the heart of many thousand
 mists,
 That came to him, and left him, on
 the heights. 60
 So lived he till his eightieth year was
 past.
 And grossly that man errs, who should
 suppose
 That the green valleys, and the
 streams and rocks,
 Were things indifferent to the Shep-
 herd's thoughts.
 Fields, where with cheerful spirits he
 had breathed 65
 The common air; hills, which with
 vigorous step

He had so often climbed; which had
 impressed
 So many incidents upon his mind
 Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or
 fear;
 Which, like a book, preserved the
 memory 70
 Of the dumb animals, whom he had
 saved,
 Had fed or sheltered, linking to such
 acts
 The certainty of honorable gain;
 Those fields, those hills—what could
 they less? had laid
 Strong hold on his affections, were to
 him 75
 A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
 The pleasure which there is in life
 itself.
 His days had not been passed in
 singleness.
 His Helpmate was a comely matron,
 old—
 Though younger than himself full
 twenty years. 80
 She was a woman of a stirring life,
 Whose heart was in her house: two
 wheels she had
 Of antique form; this large, for spin-
 ning wool;
 That small, for flax; and if one wheel
 had rest
 It was because the other was at work.
 The Pair had but one inmate in their
 house, 86
 An only Child, who had been born to
 them
 When Michael, telling o'er his years,
 began
 To deem that he was old,—in shep-
 herd's phrase,
 With one foot in the grave. This only
 Son, 90
 With two brave sheep-dogs tried in
 many a storm,

The one of an inestimable worth,
 Made all their household. I may truly
 say,
 That they were as a proverb in the
 vale
 For endless industry. When day was
 gone, 95
 And from their occupations out of
 doors
 The Son and Father were come home,
 even then,
 Their labor did not cease; unless when
 all
 Turned to the cleanly supper-board,
 and there,
 Each with a mess of pottage and
 skimmed milk, 100
 Sat round the basket piled with oaten
 cakes,
 And their plain home-made cheese.
 Yet when the meal
 Was ended, Luke (for so the Son was
 named)
 And his old Father both betook them-
 selves
 To such convenient work as might
 employ 105
 Their hands by the fireside; perhaps
 to card
 Wool for the Housewife's spindle, or
 repair
 Some injury done to sickle, flail, or
 scythe,
 Or other implement of house or field.
 Down from the ceiling, by the
 chimney's edge, 110
 That in our ancient uncouth country
 style
 With huge and black projection over-
 browed
 Large space beneath, as duly as the
 light
 Of day grew dim the Housewife hung
 a lamp; 114
 An aged utensil, which had performed

Service beyond all others of its kind.
 Early at evening did it burn—and
 late,
 Surviving comrade of uncounted
 hours,
 Which, going by from year to year,
 had found,
 And left, the couple neither gay per-
 haps 120
 Nor cheerful, yet with objects and
 with hopes,
 Living a life of eager industry.
 And now, when Luke had reached his
 eighteenth year,
 There by the light of this old lamp
 they sat,
 Father and Son, while far into the
 night 125
 The Housewife plied her own peculiar
 work,
 Making the cottage through the silent
 hours
 Murmur as with the sound of summer
 flies.
 This light was famous in its neighbor-
 hood,
 And was a public symbol of the life
 That thrifty Pair had lived. For, as it
 chanced, 131
 Their cottage on a plot of rising
 ground
 Stood single, with large prospect,
 north and south,
 High into Easedale, up to Dunmail-
 Raise,
 And westward to the village near the
 lake; 135
 And from this constant light, so regu-
 lar
 And so far seen, the House itself, by
 all
 Who dwelt within the limits of the
 vale,
 Both old and young, was named the
 Evening Star.

Thus living on through such a
 length of years, 140
 The Shepherd, if he loved himself,
 must needs
 Have loved his Helpmate; but to
 Michael's heart
 This son of his old age was yet more
 dear—
 Less from instinctive tenderness, the
 same
 Fond spirit that blindly works in the
 blood of all— 145
 Than that a child, more than all other
 gifts
 That earth can offer to declining man,
 Brings hope with it, and forward-
 looking thoughts,
 And stirrings of inquietude, when they
 By tendency of nature needs must
 fail. 150
 Exceeding was the love he bare to
 him,
 His heart and his heart's joy! For
 oftentimes
 Old Michael, while he was a babe in
 arms,
 Had done him female service, not
 alone
 For pastime and delight, as is the use
 Of fathers, but with patient mind en-
 forced 156
 To acts of tenderness; and he had
 rocked
 His cradle, as with a woman's gentle
 hand.
 And, in a later time, ere yet the Boy
 Had put on boy's attire, did Michael
 love, 160
 Albeit of a stern unbending mind,
 To have the Young-one in his sight,
 when he
 Wrought in the field, or on his shep-
 herd's stool
 Sat with a fettered sheep before him
 stretched
 Under the large old oak, that near his
 door 165
 Stood single, and, from matchless
 depth of shade,
 Chosen for the Shearer's covert from
 the sun,
 Thence in our rustic dialect was
 called
 The *Clipping Tree*, a name which yet
 it bears
 There, while they two were sitting in
 the shade, 170
 With others round them, earnest all
 and blithe,
 Would Michael exercise his heart with
 looks
 Of fond correction and reproof be-
 stowed
 Upon the Child, if he disturbed the
 sheep
 By catching at their legs, or with his
 shouts 175
 Scared them, while they lay still be-
 neath the shears.
 And when by Heaven's good grace
 the boy grew up
 A healthy Lad, and carried in his
 cheek
 Two steady roses that were five years
 old;
 Then Michael from a winter coppice
 cut 180
 With his own hand a sapling, which
 he hooped
 With iron, making it throughout in
 all
 Due requisites a perfect shepherd's
 staff,
 And gave it to the Boy; wherewith
 equipped
 He as a watchman oftentimes was
 placed 185
 At gate or gap, to stem or turn the
 flock;
 And, to his office prematurely called,

There stood the urchin, as you will
 divine,
 Something between a hindrance and a
 help;
 And for this cause not always, I be-
 lieve, 190
 Receiving from his Father hire of
 praise;
 Though nought was left undone
 which staff, or voice,
 Or looks, or threatening gestures,
 could perform.
 But soon as Luke, full ten years old,
 could stand
 Against the mountain blasts; and to
 the heights, 195
 Not fearing toil, nor length of weary
 ways,
 He with his Father daily went, and
 they
 Were as companions, why should I
 relate
 That objects which the Shepherd
 loved before
 Were dearer now? that from the Boy
 there came 200
 Feelings and emanations — things
 which were
 Light to the sun and music to the
 wind;
 And that the old Man's heart seemed
 born again?
 Thus in his Father's sight the Boy
 grew up:
 And now, when he had reached his
 eighteenth year, 205
 He was his comfort and his daily hope.
 While in this sort the simple house-
 hold lived
 From day to day, to Michael's ear
 there came
 Distressful tidings. Long before the
 time
 Of which I speak, the Shepherd had
 been bound 210

In surety for his brother's son, a man
 Of an industrious life, and ample
 means;
 But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
 Had pressed upon him; and old
 Michael now
 Was summoned to discharge the for-
 feiture, 215
 A grievous penalty, but little less
 Than half his substance. This un-
 looked-for claim,
 At the first hearing, for a moment
 took
 More hope out of his life than he
 supposed
 That any old man ever could have
 lost. 220
 As soon as he had armed himself with
 strength
 To look his trouble in the face, it
 seemed
 The Shepherd's sole resource to sell at
 once
 A portion of his patrimonial fields.
 Such was his first resolve; he thought
 again, 225
 And his heart failed him. "Isabel,"
 said he,
 Two evenings after he had heard the
 news,
 "I have been toiling more than seventy
 years,
 And in the open sunshine of God's
 love
 Have we all lived; yet if these fields
 of ours 230
 Should pass into a stranger's hand, I
 think
 That I could not lie quiet in my grave.
 Our lot is a hard lot; the sun himself
 Has scarcely been more diligent than
 I;
 And I have lived to be a fool at
 last 235
 To my own family. An evil man

That was, and made an evil choice, if
 he
 Were false to us; and if he were not
 false,
 There are ten thousand to whom loss
 like this
 Had been no sorrow. I forgive him;
 —but 240
 'Twere better to be dumb than to talk
 thus.
 "When I began, my purpose was to
 speak
 Of remedies and of a cheerful hope.
 Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel; the
 land
 Shall not go from us, and it shall be
 free; 245
 He shall possess it, free as is the
 wind
 That passes over it. We have, thou
 know'st,
 Another kinsman—he will be our
 friend
 In this distress. He is a prosperous
 man,
 Thriving in trade—and Luke to him
 shall go, 250
 And with his kinsman's help and his
 own thrift
 He quickly will repair this loss, and
 then
 He may return to us. If here he stay,
 What can be done? Where every one
 is poor,
 What can be gained?" 254
 At this the old Man paused,
 And Isabel sat silent, for her mind
 Was busy, looking back into past
 times.
 There's Richard Bateman, thought she
 to herself,
 He was a parish-boy—at the church-
 door
 They made a gathering for him, shill-
 ings, pence, 260

And halfpennies, wherewith the
 neighbors bought
 A basket, which they filled with
 peddler's wares;
 And, with this basket on his arm, the
 lad
 Went up to London, found a master
 there,
 Who, out of many, chose the trusty
 boy 265
 To go and overlook his merchandise
 Beyond the seas; where he grew won-
 drous rich,
 And left estates and monies to the
 poor.
 And, at his birthplace, built a chapel,
 floored
 With marble which he sent from for-
 eign lands. 270
 These thoughts, and many others of
 like sort,
 Passed quickly through the mind of
 Isabel,
 And her face brightened. The old
 Man was glad,
 And thus resumed:—"Well, Isabel!
 this scheme
 These two days has been meat and
 drink to me. 275
 Far more than we have lost is left us
 yet.
 —We have enough—I wish indeed
 that I
 Were younger;—but this hope is a
 good hope.
 —Make ready Luke's best garments,
 of the best
 Buy for him more, and let us send
 him forth 280
 To-morrow, or the next day, or to-
 night:
 —If he *could* go, the Boy should go
 to-night."
 Here Michael ceased, and to the
 fields went forth

With a light heart. The Housewife
for five days

Was restless morn and night, and all
day long 285

Wrought on with her best fingers to
prepare

Things needful for the journey of her
son.

But Isabel was glad when Sunday
came

To stop her in her work: for, when
she lay

By Michael's side, she through the last
two nights 290

Heard him, how he was troubled in
his sleep:

And when they rose at morning she
could see

That all his hopes were gone. That
day at noon,

She said to Luke, while they two by
themselves

Were sitting at the door, "Thou must
not go: 295

We have no other Child but thee to
lose—

None to remember—do not go away,
For if thou leave thy Father he will
die."

The Youth made answer with a
jocund voice;

And Isabel, when she had told her
fears, 300

Recovered heart. That evening her
best fare

Did she bring forth, and all together
sat

Like happy people round a Christmas
fire.

With daylight Isabel resumed her
work;

And all the ensuing week the house
appeared 305

As cheerful as a grove in Spring: at
length

The expected letter from their kins-
man came.

With kind assurances that he would
do

His utmost for the welfare of the Boy;
To which, requests were added, that
forthwith 310

He might be sent to him. Ten times
or more

The letter was read over; Isabel

Went forth to show it to the neigh-
bors round;

Nor was there at that time on Eng-
lish land

A prouder heart than Luke's. When
Isabel 315

Had to her house returned, the old
Man said,

"He shall depart to-morrow." To this
word

The Housewife answered, talking
much of things

Which, if at such short notice he
should go,

Would surely be forgotten. But at
length 320

She gave consent, and Michael was at
ease.

Near the tumultuous brook of
Greenhead Ghyll,

In that deep valley, Michael had de-
signed

To build a Sheepfold; and, before he
heard

The tidings of his melancholy loss, 325

For this same purpose he had gathered
up

A heap of stones, which by the stream-
let's edge

Lay thrown together, ready for the
work.

With Luke that evening thitherward
he walked:

And soon as they had reached the
place he stopped, 330

And thus the old Man spake to him:—
 “My Son,
 To-morrow thou wilt leave me: with
 full heart
 I look upon thee, for thou art the
 same
 That wert a promise to me ere thy
 birth,
 And all thy life hast been my daily
 joy. 335
 I will relate to thee some little part
 Of our two histories; ’twill do thee
 good
 When thou art from me, even if I
 should touch
 On things thou canst not know of.
 —After thou
 First cam’st into the world—as oft be-
 falls 340
 To new-born infants—thou didst sleep
 away
 Two days, and blessings from thy
 Father’s tongue
 Then fell upon thee. Day by day
 passed on,
 And still I loved thee with increasing
 love.
 Never to living ear came sweeter
 sounds 345
 Than when I heard thee by our own
 fireside
 First uttering, without words, a nat-
 ural tune;
 While thou, a feeding babe, didst in
 thy joy
 Sing at thy Mother’s breast. Month
 followed month,
 And in the open fields my life was
 passed 350
 And on the mountains; else I think
 that thou
 Hadst been brought up upon thy
 Father’s knees.
 But we were playmates, Luke: among
 these hills,

As well thou knowest, in us the old
 and young
 Have played together, nor with me
 didst thou 355
 Lack any pleasure which a boy can
 know.”
 Luke had a manly heart; but at these
 words
 He sobbed aloud. The old Man
 grasped his hand,
 And said, “Nay, do not take it so—I
 see
 That these are things of which I need
 not speak. 360
 —Even to the utmost I have been to
 thee
 A kind and a good Father: and herein
 I but repay a gift which I myself
 Received at others’ hands; for, though
 now old
 Beyond the common life of man, I still
 Remember them who loved me in my
 youth. 366
 Both of them sleep together: here
 they lived,
 As all their Forefathers had done; and
 when
 At length their time was come, they
 were not loath
 To give their bodies to the family
 mold. 370
 I wished that thou should’st live the
 life they lived:
 But, ’tis a long time to look back, my
 Son,
 And see so little gain from threescore
 years.
 These fields were burthened when
 they came to me; 374
 Till I was forty years of age, not more
 Than half of my inheritance was mine.
 I toiled and toiled; God blessed me in
 my work,
 And till these three weeks past the
 land was free.

—It looks as if it never could endure
Another Master. Heaven forgive me,
Luke, 380

If I judge ill for thee, but it seems
good

That thou should'st go."

At this the old Man paused;
Then, pointing to the stones near
which they stood,

Thus, after a short silence, he re-
sumed:

"This was a work for us; and now,
my Son, 385

It is a work for me. But, lay one
stone—

Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine
own hands.

Nay, Boy, be of good hope;—we both
may live

To see a better day. At eighty-four
I still am strong and hale;—do thou
thy part; 390

I will do mine.—I will begin again
With many tasks that were resigned
to thee:

Up to the heights, and in among the
storms,

Will I without thee go again, and
do

All works which I was wont to do
alone, 395

Before I knew thy face.—Heaven bless
thee, Boy!

Thy heart these two weeks has been
beating fast

With many hopes; it should be so—
yes—yes—

I knew that thou could'st never have a
wish

To leave me, Luke: thou hast been
bound to me 400

Only by links of love: when thou art
gone,

What will be left to us!—But, I for-
get

My purposes. Lay now the corner-
stone,

As I requested; and hereafter, Luke,
When thou art gone away, should evil
men 405

Be thy companions, think of me, my
Son,

And of this moment; hither turn thy
thoughts,

And God will strengthen thee: amid
all fear

And all temptation, Luke, I pray that
thou

May'st bear in mind the life thy
Fathers lived, 410

Who, being innocent, did for that
cause

Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare
thee well—

When thou return'st, thou in this
place wilt see

A work which is not here: a covenant
'Twill be between us; but, whatever
fate 415

Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last,
And bear thy memory with me to the
grave."

The Shepherd ended here; and
Luke stooped down,

And, as his Father had requested, laid
The first stone of the Sheepfold. At
the sight 420

The old Man's grief broke from him;
to his heart

He pressed his Son, he kisséd him and
wept:

And to the house together they re-
turned.

—Hushed was that House in peace, or
seeming peace,

Ere the night fell:—with morrow's
dawn the Boy 425

Began his journey, and when he had
reached

The public way, he put on a bold face;

And all the neighbors, as he passed
 their doors,
 Came forth with wishes and with
 farewell prayers,
 That followed him till he was out of
 sight. 430

A good report did from their Kins-
 man come,
 Of Luke and his well-doing: and the
 Boy
 Wrote loving letters, full of wondrous
 news,
 Which, as the Housewife phrased it,
 were throughout
 "The prettiest letters that were ever
 seen." 435

Both parents read them with rejoicing
 hearts.
 So, many months passed on: and once
 again
 The Shepherd went about his daily
 work
 With confident and cheerful thoughts;
 and now

Sometimes when he could find a
 leisure hour 440
 He to that valley took his way, and
 there

Wrought at the Sheepfold. Meantime
 Luke began
 To slacken in his duty; and, at length,
 He in the dissolute city gave himself
 To evil courses: ignominy and shame
 Fell on him, so that he was driven at
 last 446

To seek a hiding-place beyond the
 seas.

There is a comfort in the strength of
 love;
 'Twill make a thing endurable, which
 else
 Would upset the brain, or break the
 heart: 450

I have conversed with more than one
 who well

Remember the old Man, and what he
 was

Years after he had heard this heavy
 news.

His bodily frame had been from youth
 to age

Of an unusual strength. Among the
 rocks 455

He went, and still looked up to sun
 and cloud,

And listened to the wind; and, as be-
 fore,

Performed all kinds of labor for his
 sheep,

And for the land, his small inheri-
 tance.

And to that hollow dell from time to
 time 460

Did he repair, to build the Fold, of
 which

His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten
 yet

The pity which was then in every
 heart

For the old Man—and 'tis believed by
 all

That many and many a day he thither
 went, 465

And never lifted up a single stone.

There, by the Sheepfold, sometimes
 was he seen

Sitting alone, or with his faithful Dog,
 Then old, beside him, lying at his
 feet.

The length of full seven years, from
 time to time, 470

He at the building of this Sheepfold
 wrought,

And left the work unfinished when he
 died.

Three years, or little more, did Isabel
 Survive her Husband: at her death the
 estate

Was sold, and went into a stranger's
 hand. 475

The Cottage which was named the
Evening Star
 Is gone—the plowshare has been
 through the ground
 On which it stood; great changes have
 been wrought
 In all the neighborhood:—yet the oak
 is left
 That grew beside their door; and the
 remains 480
 Of the unfinished Sheepfold may be
 seen
 Beside the boisterous brook of Green-
 head Ghyll.

JOHN KEATS

The Eve of St. Agnes

ST. AGNES' EVE—ah, bitter chill it
 was!
 The owl, for all his feathers,
 was a-cold;
 The hare limped trembling through
 the frozen grass,
 And silent was the flock in woolly
 fold;
 Numb were the Beadsman's fingers
 while he told 5
 His rosary, and while his frosted
 breath,
 Like pious incense from a censer
 old,
 Seemed taking flight for heaven
 without a death,
 Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while
 his prayer he saith.

His prayer he saith, this patient,
 holy man; 10
 Then takes his lamp, and riseth
 from his knees,
 And back returneth, meager, bare-
 foot, wan,

Along the chapel aisle by slow de-
 grees:
 The sculptured dead, on each side,
 seem to freeze,
 Emprisoned in black, purgatorial
 rails: 15
 Knights, ladies, praying in dumb
 orat'ries,
 He passeth by; and his weak spirit
 fails
 To think how they may ache in icy
 hoods and mails.

Northward he turneth through a
 little door,
 And scarce three steps, ere Music's
 golden tongue 20
 Flattered to tears this agéd man and
 poor.
 But no—already had his death-bell
 rung;
 The joys of all his life were said and
 sung;
 His was harsh penance on St.
 Agnes' Eve:
 Another way he went, and soon
 among 25
 Rough ashes sat he for his soul's
 reprieve,
 And all night kept awake, for sinners'
 sake to grieve.

That ancient Beadsman heard the
 prelude soft;
 And so it chanced, for many a door
 was wide,
 From hurry to and fro. Soon, up
 aloft, 30
 The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan
 to chide:
 The level chambers, ready with their
 pride,
 Were glowing to receive a thousand
 guests:
 The carved angels, ever eager-eyed,

Stared, where upon their heads the
 cornice rests, ³⁵
 With hair blown black, and wings put
 crosswise on their breasts.

At length burst in the argent revelry,
 With plume, tiara, and all rich
 array,
 Numerous as shadows haunting
 fairly
 The brain, new-stuffed, in youth,
 with triumphs gay ⁴⁰
 Of old romance. These let us wish
 away,
 And turn, sole-thoughted, to one
 Lady there,
 Whose heart had brooded, all that
 wintry day,
 On love, and winged St. Agnes'
 saintly care,
 As she had heard old dames full many
 times declare. ⁴⁵

They told her how, upon St. Agnes'
 Eve,
 Young virgins might have visions of
 delight,
 And soft adorings from their loves
 receive
 Upon the honeyed middle of the
 night,
 If ceremonies due they did aright; ⁵⁰
 As, supperless to bed they must re-
 tire,
 And couch supine their beauties, lily
 white;
 Nor look behind, nor sideways, but
 require
 Of Heaven with upward eyes for all
 that they desire.

Full of this whim was thoughtful
 Madeline: ⁵⁵
 The music, yearning like a God in
 pain,

She scarcely heard: her maiden eyes
 divine,
 Fixed on the floor, saw many a
 sweeping train
 Pass by—she heeded not at all: in
 vain
 Came many a tiptoe, amorous cava-
 lier, ⁶⁰
 And back retired; not cooled by
 high disdain,
 But she saw not: her heart was
 elsewhere;
 She sighed for Agnes' dreams, the
 sweetest of the year.

She danced along with vague, re-
 gardless eyes,
 Anxious her lips, her breathing
 quick and short: ⁶⁵
 The hallowed hour was near at
 hand: she sighs
 Amid the timbrels, and the thronged
 resort
 Of whisperers in anger or in sport;
 'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate,
 and scorn,
 Hoodwinked with fairy fancy; all
 amort, ⁷⁰
 Save to St. Agnes and her lambs un-
 shorn,
 And all the bliss to be before to-mor-
 row morn.

So, purposing each moment to re-
 tire,
 She lingered still. Meantime, across
 the moors,
 Had come young Porphyro, with
 heart on fire ⁷⁵
 For Madeline. Beside the portal
 doors,
 Buttressed from moonlight, stands
 he, and implores
 All saints to give him sight of Made-
 line,

But for one moment in the tedious
hours,
That he might gaze and worship all
unseen; 80
Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss—
in sooth such things have been.

He ventures in: let no buzzed whis-
per tell;
All eyes be muffled, or a hundred
swords
Will storm his heart, Love's fev'rous
citadel:
For him, those chambers held bar-
barian hordes, 85
Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded
lords,
Whose very dogs would execrations
howl
Against his lineage; not one breast
affords
Him any mercy in that mansion
foul,
Save one old beldame, weak in body
and in soul. 90

Ah, happy chance! the agéd crea-
ture came
Shuffling alone with ivory-headed
wand,
To where he stood, hid from the
torch's flame,
Behind a broad hall-pillar, far be-
yond
The sound of merriment and chorus
bland. 95
He startled her; but soon she knew
his face,
And grasped his fingers in her
palsied hand,
Saying, "Mercy, Porphyro! hie thee
from this place;
They are all here to-night, the whole
blood-thirsty race!

"Get hence! get hence! there's
dwarfish Hildebrand; 100
He had a fever late, and in the fit
He curséd thee and thine, both
house and land:
Then there's that old Lord Maurice,
not a whit
More tame for his gray hairs—Alas
me! flit!
Flit like a ghost away."—"Ah, Gos-
sip dear, 105
We're safe enough; here in this arm-
chair sit,
And tell me how"—"Good saints!
not here, not here;
Follow me, child, or else these stones
will be thy bier."

He followed through a lowly archéd
way,
Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty
plume, 110
And as she muttered "Well-a—well-
a-day!"
He found him in a little moonlight
room,
Pale, latticed, chill, and silent as a
tomb.
"Now tell me where is Madeline,"
said he,
"O tell me, Angela, by the holy
loom 115
Which none but secret sisterhood
may see,
When they St. Agnes' wool are weav-
ing piously."

"St. Agnes! Ah! it is St. Agnes'
Eve—
Yet men will murder upon holy
days:
Thou must hold water in a witch's
sieve, 120
And be liege-lord of all the Elves
and Fays

To venture so: it fills me with
 amaze
 To see thee, Porphyro!—St. Agnes’
 Eve!
 God’s help! my lady fair the con-
 jurer plays
 This very night: good angels her
 deceive! ¹²⁵
 But let me laugh awhile,—I’ve mickle
 time to grieve.”

Feebly she laugheth in the languid
 moon,
 While Porphyro upon her face doth
 look,
 Like puzzled urchin on an agéd
 crone
 Who keepeth closed a wondrous
 riddle-book, ¹³⁰
 As spectacled she sits in chimney
 nook.
 But soon his eyes grew brilliant,
 when she told
 His lady’s purpose; and he scarce
 could brook
 Tears, at the thought of those en-
 chantments cold,
 And Madeline asleep in lap of legends
 old. ¹³⁵

Sudden a thought came like a full-
 blown rose,
 Flushing his brow, and in his pained
 heart
 Made purple riot: then doth he pro-
 pose
 A stratagem, that makes the bel-
 dame start:
 “A cruel man and impious thou
 art: ¹⁴⁰
 Sweet lady! let her pray, and sleep,
 and dream
 Alone with her good angels, far
 apart

From wicked men like thee. Go,
 go! I deem
 Thou canst not surely be the same
 that thou didst seem.”

“I will not harm her, by all saints I
 swear,” ¹⁴⁵
 Quoth Porphyro: “O may I ne’er
 find grace
 When my weak voice shall whisper
 its last prayer,
 If one of her soft ringlets I displace,
 Or look with ruffian passion in her
 face.
 Good Angela, believe me, by these
 tears, ¹⁵⁰
 Or I will, even in a moment’s space,
 Awake, with horrid shout, my foe-
 men’s ears,
 And beard them, though they be more
 fanged than wolves and bears.”

“Ah! why wilt thou affright a feeble
 soul?
 A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, church-
 yard thing, ¹⁵⁵
 Whose passing-bell may ere the mid-
 night toll;
 Whose prayers for thee, each morn
 and evening,
 Were never missed.” Thus plain-
 ing, doth she bring
 A gentler speech from burning Por-
 phyro;
 So woeful, and of such deep sor-
 rowing, ¹⁶⁰
 That Angela gives promise she will
 do
 Whatever he shall wish, betide her
 weal or woe.

Which was, to lead him, in close
 secrecy,
 Even to Madeline’s chamber, and
 there hide
 Him in a closet, of such privacy ¹⁶⁵

That he might see her beauty un-
 espied,
 And win perhaps that night a peer-
 less bride,
 While legioned fairies paced the
 coverlet,
 And pale enchantment held her
 sleepy-eyed.
 Never on such a night have lovers
 met, 170
 Since Merlin paid his Demon all the
 monstrous debt.

"It shall be as thou wishest," said
 the Dame:
 "All cates and dainties shall be
 stored there
 Quickly on this feast-night: by the
 tambour-frame
 Her own lute thou wilt see: no time
 to spare, 175
 For I am slow and feeble, and scarce
 dare
 On such a catering trust my dizzy
 head.
 Wait here, my child, with patience;
 kneel in prayer
 The while. Ah! thou must needs
 the lady wed,
 Or may I never leave my grave among
 the dead." 180

So saying, she hobbled off with busy
 fear.

The lover's endless minutes slowly
 passed;
 The dame returned, and whispered
 in his ear

To follow her; with agéd eyes aghast
 From fright of dim espial. Safe at
 last, 185

Through many a dusky gallery,
 they gain

The maiden's chamber, silken,
 hushed, and chaste;

Where Porphyro took covert, pleased
 amain.

His poor guide hurried back with
 agues in her brain.

Her faltering hand upon the balus-
 trade, 190

Old Angela was feeling for the
 stair,

When Madeline, St. Agnes' charméd-
 maid,

Rose, like a missioned spirit, un-
 aware:

With silver taper's light, and pious
 care,

She turned, and down the agéd gos-
 sip led 195

To a safe level matting. Now pre-
 pare,

Young Porphyro, for gazing on that
 bed;

She comes, she comes again, like ring-
 dove frayed and fled.

Out went the taper as she hurried
 in;

Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine,
 died: 200

She closed the door, she panted, all
 akin

To spirits of the air, and visions
 wide:

No uttered syllable, or, woe betide!
 But to her heart, her heart was

voluble,
 Paining with eloquence her balmy
 side; 205

As though a tongueless nightingale
 should swell

Her throat in vain, and die, heart-
 stifled, in her dell.

A casement high and triple-arched
 there was,

All garlanded with carven imag'ries,

Of fruits and flowers, and bunches
 of knot-grass, 210
 And diamonded with panes of
 quaint device,
 Innumerable of stains and splendid
 dyes,
 As are the tiger-moth's deep-
 damasked wings;
 And in the midst, 'mong thousand
 heraldries,
 And twilight saints, and dim em-
 blazonings, 215
 A shielded scutcheon blushed with
 blood of queens and kings.

Full on this casement shone the
 wintry moon,
 And threw warm gules on Made-
 line's fair breast,
 As down she knelt for Heaven's
 grace and boon;
 Rose-bloom fell on her hands, to-
 gether pressed, 220
 And on her silver cross soft ame-
 thyst,
 And on her hair a glory, like a
 saint:
 She seemed a splendid angel, newly
 dressed,
 Save wings, for heaven:—Porphyro
 grew faint:
 She knelt, so pure a thing, so free
 from mortal taint. 225

Anon his heart revives: her vespers
 done,
 Of all its wreathéd pearls her hair
 she frees;
 Unclasps her warméd jewels one by
 one;
 Loosens her fragrant bodice; by de-
 grees
 Her rich attire creeps rustling to her
 knees: 230

Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-
 weed,
 Pensive awhile she dreams awake,
 and sees,
 In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,
 But dares not look behind, or all the
 charm is fled.

Soon, trembling in her soft and
 chilly nest, 235
 In sort of wakeful swoon, perplexed
 she lay,
 Until the poppiéd warmth of sleep
 oppressed
 Her soothéd limbs, and soul fatigued
 away;
 Flown, like a thought, until the
 morrow-day;
 Blissfully havened both from joy
 and pain; 240
 Clapsed like a missal where swart
 Paynims pray;
 Blinded alike from sunshine and
 from rain,
 As though a rose should shut, and be
 a bud again.

Stol'n to this paradise, and so en-
 tranced,
 Porphyro gazed upon her empty
 dress, 245
 And listened to her breathing, if it
 chanced
 To wake into a slumberous tender-
 ness;
 Which when he heard, that minute
 did he bless,
 And breathed himself: then from
 the closet crept,
 Noiseless as fear in a wide wilder-
 ness, 250
 And over the hushed carpet, silent,
 stepped,
 And 'tween the curtains peeped,
 where, lo!—how fast she slept!

Then by the bedside, where the
faded moon
Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he
set
A table, and, half anguished, threw
thereon 255
A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and
jet:—
O for some drowsy Morphean
amulet!
The boisterous, midnight, festive
clarion,
The kettle-drum, and far-heard
clarinet,
Affray his ears, though but in dying
tone:— 260
The hall-door shuts again, and all the
noise is gone.

And still she slept an azure-lidded
sleep,
In blanchéd linen, smooth, and
lavendered,
While he from forth the closet
brought a heap
Of candied apple, quince, and plum,
and gourd; 265
With jellies soother than the creamy
curd,
And lucent syrops, tinct with cinna-
mon;
Manna and dates, in argosy trans-
ferred
From Fez; and spiced dainties, every
one,
From silken Samarcand to cedared
Lebanon. 270

These delicacies he heaped with
glowing hand
On golden dishes and in baskets
bright
Of wreathed silver: sumptuous they
stand

In the retiréd quiet of the night,
Filling the chilly room with per-
fume light.— 275
“And now, my love, my seraph fair,
awake!
Thou art my heaven, and I thine
eremite:
Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes’
sake,
Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my
soul doth ache.”

Thus whispering, his warm, un-
nervéd arm 280
Sank in her pillow. Shaded was
her dream
By the dusk curtains:—’twas a mid-
night charm
Impossible to melt as icéd stream:
The lustrous salvers in the moon-
light gleam;
Broad golden fringe upon the car-
pet lies: 285
It seemed he never, never could re-
deem
From such a steadfast spell his lady’s
eyes;
So mused awhile, entailed in wooféd
phantasies.

Awakening up, he took her hollow
lute,—
Tumultuous,—and, in chords that
tenderest be, 290
He played an ancient ditty, long
since mute,
In Provence called “La belle dame
sans mercy”
Close to her ear touching the
melody;—
Wherewith disturbed, she uttered a
soft moan:
He ceased—she panted quick—and
suddenly 295

Her blue affrayéd eyes wide open
shone:
Upon his knees he sank, pale as
smooth-sculptured stone.

Her eyes were open, but she still
beheld,
Now wide awake, the vision of her
sleep:
There was a painful change, that
nigh expelled ³⁰⁰
The blisses of her dream so pure
and deep,
At which fair Madeline began to
weep,
And moan forth witless words with
many a sigh,
While still her gaze on Porphyro
would keep;
Who knelt, with joinéd hands and
piteous eye, ³⁰⁵
Fearing to move or speak, she looked
so dreamingly.

"Ah, Porphyro!" said she, "but even
now
Thy voice was at sweet tremble in
mine ear,
Made tunable with every sweetest
vow;
And those sad eyes were spiritual
and clear: ³¹⁰
How changed thou art! how pallid,
chill, and drear!
Give me that voice again, my Por-
phyro,
Those looks immortal, those com-
plainings dear!
Oh leave me not in this eternal woe,
For if thou diest, my Love, I know
not where to go." ³¹⁵

Beyond a mortal man impassioned
far
At these voluptuous accents, he
arose,

Ethereal, flushed, and like a throbbing
star
Seen 'mid the sapphire heaven's
deep repose;
Into her dream he melted, as the
rose ³²⁰
Blendeth its odor with the violet,—
Solution sweet: meantime the frost-
wind blows
Like Love's alarum, pattering the
sharp sleet
Against the window-panes; St. Agnes'
moon hath set.

'Tis dark: quick pattereth the flaw-
blown sleet: ³²⁵
"This is no dream, my bride, my
Madeline!"
'Tis dark: the icéd gusts still rave
and beat:
"No dream, alas! alas! and woe is
mine!
Porphyro will leave me here to fade
and pine.
Cruel! what traitor could thee hither
bring? ³³⁰
I curse not, for my heart is lost in
thine,
Though thou forsakest a deceived
thing;—
A dove forlorn and lost with sick un-
pruned wing."

"My Madeline! sweet dreamer!
lovely bride!
Say, may I be for aye thy vassal
blest? ³³⁵
Thy beauty's shield, heart-shaped
and vermeil-dyed?
Ah, silver shrine, here will I take
my rest
After so many hours of toil and
quest,
A famished pilgrim,—saved by
miracle.

Though I have found, I will not rob
thy nest, 340
Saving of thy sweet self; if thou
think'st well
To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude
infidel.

"Hark! 'tis an elfin storm from fairy
land,
Of haggard seeming, but a boon in-
deed:
Arise—arise! the morning is at
hand;— 345
The bloated wassailers will never
heed;—
Let us away, my love, with happy
speed;
There are no ears to hear, or eyes to
see,—
Drowned all in Rhenish and the
slepy mead.
Awake! arise! my love, and fearless
be, 350
For o'er the southern moors I have a
home for thee."

She hurried at his words, beset with
fears,
For there were sleeping dragons all
around,
At glaring watch, perhaps, with
ready spears—
Down the wide stairs a darkling
way they found; 355
In all the house was heard no hu-
man sound.
A chain-drooped lamp was flicker-
ing by each door;
The arras, rich with horseman,
hawk, and hound,
Fluttered in the besieging wind's
uproar;
And the long carpets rose along the
gusty floor. 360

They glide, like phantoms, into the
wide hall;
Like phantoms to the iron porch
they glide;
Where lay the Porter, in uneasy
sprawl,
With a huge empty flagon by his
side:
The wakeful bloodhound rose, and
shook his hide, 365
But his sagacious eye an inmate
owns:
By one, and one, the bolts full easy
slide:—
The chains lie silent on the foot-
worn stones;
The key turns, and the door upon its
hinges groans.

And they are gone: ay, ages long
ago. 370
These lovers fled away into the
storm.
That night the Baron dreamed of
many a woe,
And all his warrior-guests, with
shade and form
Of witch, and demon, and large
coffin-worm,
Were long be-nightmared. Angela
the old 375
Died palsy-twitched, with meager
face deform;
The Beadsman, after thousand aves
told,
For aye unsought-for slept among his
ashes cold.

WILLIAM MORRIS

The Haystack in the Floods

HAD she come all the way for
this,
To part at last without a kiss?
Yea, had she borne the dirt and rain.

That her own eyes might see him
 slain
 Beside the haystack in the floods? 5

Along the dripping leafless woods,
 The stirrup touching either shoe,
 She rode astride as troopers do;
 With kirtle kilted to her knee,
 To which the mud splashed wretch-
 edly. 10

And the wet dripped from every tree
 Upon her head and heavy hair,
 And on her eyelids broad and fair;
 The tears and rain ran down her
 face.

By fits and starts they rode apace, 15
 And very often was his place
 Far off from her: he had to ride
 Ahead, to see what might betide
 When the roads crossed; and some-
 times, when

There rose a murmuring from his
 men, 20

Had to turn back with promises.
 Ah me! she had but little ease;
 And often for pure doubt and dread
 She sobbed, made giddy in the
 head

By the swift riding; while, for cold, 25
 Her slender fingers scarce could hold
 The wet reins; yea, and scarcely, too,
 She felt the foot within her shoe
 Against the stirrup. All for this:
 To part at last without a kiss 30
 Beside the haystack in the floods.

For when they neared that old soaked
 hay,

They saw, across the only way,
 That Judas, Godmar; and the three
 Red running lions dismally 35
 Grinned from his pennon, under
 which

In one straight line along the ditch,
 They counted thirty heads.

So then,
 While Robert turned round to his
 men,

She saw at once the wretched end, 40
 And, stooping down, tried hard to
 rend

Her coif the wrong way from her
 head,
 And hid her eyes; while Robert
 said:

"Nay, love, 'tis scarcely two to one;
 At Poitiers where we made them
 run 45
 So fast—Why, sweet my love, good
 cheer,

The Gascon frontier is so near,
 Nought after this."

But, "O," she said,
 "My God! my God! I have to tread
 The long way back without you;
 then 50

The court at Paris; those six men;
 The gratings of the Chatelet,
 The swift Seine on some rainy day
 Like this, and people standing by
 And laughing, while my weak hands
 try 55

To recollect how strong men swim.
 All this, or else a life with him,
 For which I should be damned at
 last:
 Would God that this next hour were
 past!"

He answered not, but cried his cry, 60
 "St. George for Marny!" cheerily;
 And laid his hand upon her rein.
 Alas! no man of all his train
 Gave back that cheery cry again;
 And, while for rage his thumb beat
 fast 65

Upon his sword-hilt, some one cast
 About his neck a kerchief long,
 And bound him.

Then they went along
 To Godmar; who said: "Now, Jehane,
 Your lover's life is on the wane 70
 So fast that, if this very hour
 You yield not as my paramour,
 He will not see the rain leave off—
 Nay, keep your tongue from gibe and
 scoff,
 Sir Robert, or I slay you now." 75

She laid her hand upon her brow,
 Then gazed upon the palm, as though
 She thought her forehead bled, and—
 "No!"

She said, and turned her head away,
 As there were nothing else to say, 80
 And everything were settled. Red
 Grew Godmar's face from chin to
 head:

"Jehane, on yonder hill there stands
 My castle, guarding well my lands:
 What hinders me from taking you, 85
 And doing that I list to do
 To your fair willful body, while
 Your knight lies dead?"

A wicked smile
 Wrinkled her face, her lips grew thin,
 A long way out she thrust her chin: 90
 "You know that I should strangle you
 While you were sleeping; or bite
 through
 Your throat, by God's help—ah!" she
 said,

"Lord Jesus, pity your poor maid!
 For in such wise they hem me in, 95
 I cannot choose but sin and sin,
 Whatever happens: yet I think
 They could not make me eat or drink,
 And so should I just reach my rest."
 "Nay, if you do not my behest, 100
 O Jehane! though I love you well,"
 Said Godmar, "would I fail to tell
 All that I know?" "Foul lies," she
 said.

"Eh! lies, my Jehane? by God's head,
 At Paris folks would deem them
 true! 105

Do you know, Jehane, they cry for
 you:

'Jehane the brown! Jehane the brown!
 Give us Jehane to burn or drown!'
 Eh—gag me Robert!—sweet my
 friend,

This were indeed a piteous end 110
 For those long fingers, and long feet,
 And long neck, and smooth shoulders
 sweet;

An end that few men would forget
 That saw it—So, an hour yet:
 Consider, Jehane, which to take 115
 Of life or death!"

So, scarce awake,
 Dismounting, did she leave that place,
 And totter some yards: with her face
 Turned upward to the sky she lay,
 Her head on a wet heap of hay, 120
 And fell asleep. And while she slept,
 And did not dream, the minutes crept
 Round to the twelve again; but she,
 Being waked at last, sighed quietly,
 And strangely childlike came, and
 said: 125

"I will not." Straightway Godmar's
 head,
 As though it hung on strong wires,
 turned
 Most sharply round, and his face
 burned.

For Robert—both his eyes were dry,
 He could not weep, but gloomily 130
 He seemed to watch the rain; yea,
 too,
 His lips were firm. He tried once
 more
 To touch her lips; she reached out,
 sore
 And vain desire so tortured them,

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>The poor gray lips, and now the hem 135 Of his sleeve brushed them.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">With a start</p> <p>Up Godmar rose, thrust them apart; From Robert's throat he loosed the bands Of silk and mail. With empty hands Held out, she stood and gazed, and saw 140 The long bright blade without a flaw Glide out from Godmar's sheath, his hand In Robert's hair; she saw him bend Back Robert's head; she saw him send The thin steel down. The blow told well: 145</p> | <p>Right backward the knight Robert fell, And moaned as dogs do, being half dead, Unwitting, as I deem. So then Godmar turned grinning to his men, Who ran, some five or six, and beat 150 His head to pieces at their feet.</p> <p>Then Godmar turned again and said: "So, Jehane, the first fitte is read! Take note, my lady, that your way Lies backward to the Chatelet!" 155 She shook her head and gazed awhile At her cold hands with a rueful smile, As though this thing had made her mad.</p> <p>This was the parting that they had Beside the haystack in the floods. 160</p> |
|--|---|

MEDITATIVE LYRICS

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Lines

COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN
ABBEY, ON REVISITING THE BANKS OF THE
WYE DURING A TOUR. JULY 13, 1798

FIVE years have passed; five sum-
mers, with the length
Of five long winters! and again
I hear
These waters, rolling from their
mountain-springs
With a soft inland murmur.—Once
again
Do I behold these steep and lofty
cliffs, 5
That on a wild secluded scene impress

Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and
connect
The landscape with the quiet of the
sky.
The day is come when I again re-
pose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and
view 10
These plots of cottage-ground, these
orchard-tufts,
Which at this season, with their un-
ripe fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose
themselves
'Mid groves and copses. Once again
I see
These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows,
little lines 15

Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,
 Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke
 Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!
 With some uncertain notice, as might seem
 Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods 20
 Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire
 The hermit sits alone.

These beauteous forms,
 Through a long absence, have not been to me
 As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
 But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din 25
 Of towns and cities, I have owed to them
 In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
 Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
 And passing even into my purer mind,
 With tranquil restoration:—feelings too 30
 Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,
 As have no slight or trivial influence
 On that best portion of a good man's life,
 His little, nameless, unremembered, acts
 Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust, 35
 To them I may have owed another gift,
 Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,
 In which the burthen of the mystery,

In which the heavy and the weary weight
 Of all this unintelligible world, 40
 Is lightened.—that serene and blessed mood,
 In which the affections gently lead us on,—
 Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
 And even the motion of our human blood
 Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
 In body, and become a living soul: 46
 While with an eye made quiet by the power
 Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
 We see into the life of things.

If this
 Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft— 50
 In darkness and amid the many shapes
 Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
 Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
 Have hung upon the beatings of my heart—
 How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee, 55
 O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer through the woods,
 How often has my spirit turned to thee!
 And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,
 With many recognitions dim and faint,
 And somewhat of a sad perplexity, 60
 The picture of the mind revives again:
 While here I stand, not only with the sense

Of present pleasure, but with pleasing
thoughts
That in this moment there is life and
food
For future years. And so I dare to
hope, 65
Though changed, no doubt, from
what I was when first
I came among these hills; when like
a roe
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the
sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely
streams,
Wherever nature led: more like a
man 70
Flying from something that he
dreads, than one
Who sought the thing he loved. For
nature then
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish
days,
And their glad animal movements all
gone by)
To me was all in all.—I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding
cataract 76
Haunted me like a passion; the tall
rock,
The mountain, and the deep and
gloomy wood,
Their colors and their forms, were
then to me
An appetite; a feeling and a love, 80
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, nor any in-
terest
Unborrowed from the eye.—That
time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no
more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for
this 85
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur;
other gifts

Have followed; for such loss, I would
believe,
Abundant recompense. For I have
learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing
often-times 90
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of
ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have
felt
A presence that disturbs me with the
joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sub-
lime 95
Of something far more deeply inter-
fused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting
suns,
And the round ocean and the living
air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of
man;
A motion and a spirit, that impels 100
All thinking things, all objects of all
thought,
And rolls through all things. There-
fore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the
woods,
And mountains; and of all that we
behold
From this green earth; of all the
mighty world 105
Of eye, and ear,—both what they half
create,
And what perceive; well pleased to
recognize
In nature and the language of the
sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts,
the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart,
and soul 110

Of all my moral being.
Nor perchance,
If I were not thus taught, should I
the more
Suffer my genial spirits to decay:
For thou art with me here upon the
banks
Of this fair river; thou my dearest
Friend, 115
My dear, dear Friend; and in thy
voice I catch
The language of my former heart,
and read
My former pleasures in the shooting
lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little
while
May I behold in thee what I was
once, 120
My dear, dear Sister! and this prayer
I make,
Knowing that Nature never did be-
tray
The heart that loved her; 'tis her
privilege,
Through all the years of this our life,
to lead
From joy to joy: for she can so in-
form 125
The mind that is within us, so im-
press
With quietness and beauty, and so
feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil
tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of sel-
fish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is,
nor all 130
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we
behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the
moon

Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain-winds be
free 136
To blow against thee: and, in after
years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be ma-
tured
Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely
forms, 140
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies;
oh! then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what
healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember
me, 145
And these my exhortations! Nor,
perchance—
If I should be where I no more can
hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild
eyes these gleams
Of past existence—wilt thou then for-
get
That on the banks of this delightful
stream 150
We stood together; and that I, so
long
A worshiper of Nature, hither came
Unwearied in that service: rather
say
With warmer love—oh! with far
deeper zeal
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then
forget, 155
That after many wanderings, many
years
Of absence, these steep woods and
lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape,
were to me
More dear, both for themselves and
for thy sake!

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

*When the Lamp is Shattered**From In Memoriam*

I

WHEN the lamp is shattered
The light in the dust lies
dead—

When the cloud is scattered
The rainbow's glory is shed.

When the lute is broken,
Sweet tones are remembered not;

When the lips have spoken,
Loved accents are soon forgot.

II

As music and splendor
Survive not the lamp and the lute, 10

The heart's echoes render
No song when the spirit is mute:—

No song but sad dirges,
Like the wind through a ruined cell,

Or the mournful surges 15
That ring the dead seaman's knell.

III

When hearts have once mingled
Love first leaves the well-built nest;

The weak one is singled
To endure what it once possessed. 20

O Love! who bewailest
The frailty of all things here,

Why choose you the frailest
For your cradle, your home, and your
bier?

IV

Its passions will rock thee 25
As the storms rock the ravens on
high;

Bright reason will mock thee,
Like the sun from a wintry sky.

From thy nest every rafter
Will rot, and thine eagle home 30

Leave thee naked to laughter,
When leaves fall and cold winds
come.

LIV

O YET we trust that somehow
good
Will be the final goal of ill,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless
feet; 5

That not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile com-
plete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire 10
Is shriveled in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all, 15
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream; but what am I?
An infant crying in the night;
An infant crying for the light,
And with no language but a cry. 20

LV

The wish, that of the living whole
No life may fail beyond the grave,
Derives it not from what we have
The likest God within the soul?

Are God and Nature then at strife, 5
That Nature lends such evil dreams?
So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life,

That I, considering everywhere
Her secret meaning in her deeds, 10

And finding that of fifty seeds
She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of cares
Upon the great world's altar-stairs 15
That slope through darkness up to
God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and
grope,
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope. 20

xcvi

You say, but with no touch of scorn,
Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-blue
eyes

Are tender over drowning flies,
You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not: one indeed I knew 5
In many a subtle question versed,
Who touched a jarring lyre at first,
But ever strove to make it true;

Perplexed in faith, but pure in deeds,
At last he beat his music out. 10
There lives more faith in honest
doubt,

Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gathered
strength,

He would not make his judgment
blind,

He faced the specters of the mind 15
And laid them; thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own,
And Power was with him in the
night,

Which makes the darkness and the
light,

And dwells not in the light alone, 20

But in the darkness and the cloud,
As over Sinai's peaks of old,
While Israel made their gods of
gold,
Although the trumpet blew so loud.

cxviii

Contemplate all this work of Time,
The giant laboring in his youth;
Nor dream of human love and
truth,
As dying Nature's earth and lime;

But trust that those we call the dead 5
Are breathers of an ampler day
For ever nobler ends. They say,
The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,
And grew to seeming-random
forms, 10

The seeming prey of cyclic storms,
Till at the last arose the man;

Who throve and branched from clime
to clime,
The herald of a higher race,
And of himself in higher place, 15
If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more;
Or, crowned with attributes of woe
Like glories, move his course, and
show

That life is not as idle ore, 20

But iron dug from central gloom,
And heated hot with burning fears,
And dipped in baths of hissing tears,
And battered with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly 25
The reeling Faun, the sensual feast;

Move upward, working out the
beast,

And let the ape and tiger die.

Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy
face,

By faith, and faith alone, embrace
Believing where we cannot prove;

Thine are these orbs of light and
shade; 5

Thou madest Life in man and brute;
Thou madest Death; and lo, thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
Thou madest man, he knows not
why, 10

He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him: thou art
just.

Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest, manhood, thou.
Our wills are ours, we know not
how; 15

Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be;
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than
they. 20

We have but faith: we cannot know,
For knowledge is of things we see;
And yet we trust it comes from thee,
A beam in darkness: let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to
more, 25
But more of reverence in us dwell;
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight;
We mock thee when we do not
fear: 30

But help thy foolish ones to bear;
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy
light.

Forgive what seemed my sin in me,
What seemed my worth since I be-
gan;

For merit lives from man to man, 35
And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,
Thy creature, whom I found so fair.
I trust he lives in thee, and there
I find him worthier to be loved. 40

Forgive these wild and wandering
cries,
Confusions of a wasted youth;
Forgive them where they fail in
truth,
And in thy wisdom make me wise.

ROBERT BROWNING

Prospice

FEAR death?—to feel the fog in my
throat,
The mist in my face,
When the snows begin, and the blasts
denote
I am nearing the place,
The power of the night, the press of
the storm, 5
The post of the foe;
Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a
visible form,
Yet the strong man must go:
For the journey is done and the sum-
mit attained,
And the barriers fall, 10
Though a battle's to fight ere the
guerdon be gained,
The reward of it all.

I was ever a fighter, so—one fight
 more,
 The best and the last!
 I would hate that death bandaged my
 eyes, and forebore, 15
 And bade me creep past.
 No! let me taste the whole of it, fare
 like my peers
 The heroes of old,
 Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad
 life's arrears
 Of pain, darkness and cold. 20
 For sudden the worst turns the best
 to the brave,
 The black minute's at end,
 And the elements' rage, the fiend-
 voices that rave,
 Shall dwindle, shall blend,
 Shall change, shall become first a
 peace out of pain, 25
 Then a light, then thy breast,
 O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp
 thee again,
 And with God be the rest!

MATTHEW ARNOLD

Dover Beach

THE sea is calm to-night.
 The tide is full, the moon lies
 fair
 Upon the straits;—on the French
 coast the light
 Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of Eng-
 land stand,
 Glimmering and vast, out in the tran-
 quil bay. 5
 Come to the window, sweet is the
 night-air!
 Only, from the long line of spray
 Where the sea meets the moon-
 blanched land,

Listen! you hear the grating roar
 Of pebbles which the waves draw
 back, and fling, 10
 At their return, up the high strand,
 Begin, and cease, and then again
 begin,
 With tremulous cadence slow, and
 bring
 The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago 15
 Heard it on the Ægean, and it
 brought
 Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
 Of human misery; we
 Find also in the sound a thought,
 Hearing it by this distant northern
 sea. 20
 The Sea of Faith
 Was once, too, at the full, and round
 earth's shore
 Lay like the folds of a bright girdle
 furled.
 But now I only hear
 Its melancholy, long, withdrawing
 roar, 25
 Retreating, to the breath
 Of the night-wind, down the vast
 edges drear
 And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true
 To one another! for the world, which
 seems 30
 To lie before us like a land of dreams,
 So various, so beautiful, so new,
 Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor
 light,
 Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for
 pain;
 And we are here as on a darkling
 plain 35
 Swept with confused alarms of strug-
 gle and flight,
 Where ignorant armies clash by night.

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY

EMILY DICKINSON

Invictus

O ur of the night that covers me,
 Black as the Pit from pole
 to pole,
 I thank whatever gods may be
 For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance 5
 I have not winced nor cried aloud.
 Under the bludgeonings of chance
 My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
 Looms but the horror of the shade,
 And yet the menace of the years 11
 Finds, and shall find me, unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
 How charged with punishments
 the scroll,
 I am the master of my fate; 15
 I am the captain of my soul.

*To Fight Aloud Is Very Brave*¹

T o fight aloud is very brave,
 But gallanter, I know,
 Who charge within the bosom,
 The cavalry of woe.

Who win, and nations do not see, 5
 Who fall, and none observe,
 Whose dying eyes no country
 Regards with patriot love.

We trust, in plumed procession,
 For such the angels go, 10
 Rank after rank, with even feet
 And uniforms of snow.

¹ From *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, Centenary Edition, edited by Martha Dickinson Bianchi and Alfred Leet Hampson. Reprinted by permission of Little, Brown & Company.

RELIGIOUS LYRICS

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH

Qui Laborat, Orat

O NLY Source of all our light
 and life,
 Whom as our truth, our
 strength, we see and feel,
 But whom the hours of mortal moral
 strife
 Alone aright reveal!

Mine inmost soul, before Thee inly
 brought, 5
 Thy presence owns ineffable, di-
 vine;

Chastised each rebel self-centered
 thought,
 My will adareth Thine.

With eye down-dropped, if then this
 earthly mind
 Speechless remain, or speechless e'en
 depart; 10
 Nor seek to see—for what of earthly
 kind
 Can see Thee as Thou art?—

If well-assured 'tis but profanely bold
 In thought's abstractest forms to
 seem to see,

It dare not dare the dread com-
munion hold 15
In ways unworthy Thee.

O not unowned, thou shalt unnamed
forgive,
In worldly walks the prayerless
heart prepare;
And if in work its life it seem to live,
Shalt make that work be prayer. 20

Nor times shall lack, when while the
work it plies,
Unsummoned powers the binding
film shall part,
And scarce by happy tears made dim,
the eyes
In recognition start.

But, as thou wilt, give or e'en for-
bear 25
The beatific supersensual sight,
So, with Thy blessing blest, that
humbler prayer
Approach Thee morn and night.

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

Lead, Kindly Light

LEAD, kindly Light, amid th' en-
circling gloom,
Lead Thou me on!
The night is dark, and I am far from
home;
Lead Thou me on!
Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to
see 5
The distant scene; one step enough
for me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that
Thou
Shouldst lead me on;

I loved to choose and see my path;
but no
Lead Thou me on! 10
I loved the garish day, and, spite of
fears,
Pride ruled my will. Remember not
past years!
So long Thy power has blest me, sure
it still
Will lead me on
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and
torrent, till 15
The night is gone,
And with the morn those angel faces
smile
Which I have loved long since, and
lost awhile!

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

A Christmas Carol

IN the bleak mid-winter
Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, 5
Snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter
Long ago.

Our God, Heaven cannot hold Him
Nor earth sustain; 10
Heaven and earth shall flee away
When he comes to reign:
In the bleak mid-winter
A stable-place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty 15
Jesus Christ.

Enough for Him whom cherubim
Worship night and day,
A breastful of milk
And a manger full of hay; 20

Enough for Him whom angels
 Fall down before,
 The ox and ass and camel
 Which adore.

Angels and archangels
 May have gathered there,
 Cherubim and seraphim
 Throng'd the air
 But only His mother
 In her maiden bliss
 Worshiped her Beloved
 With a kiss.

What can I give Him,
 Poor as I am?
 If I were a shepherd
 I would bring a lamb,
 If I were a wise man
 I would do my part,—
 Yet what I can I give Him,
 Give my heart.

JOHN BANNISTER TABB

To the Christ

THOU hast on earth a Trinity—
 Thyself, my fellow-man and
 me;
 When one with him, then one with
 Thee;
 Nor, save together, Thine are we.

Nekros

Lo! all thy glory gone!
 God's masterpiece undone!
 The last created and the first to fall;
 The noblest, frailest, godliest of all.

Death seems to conquer now, 5
 And yet his victor thou:
 The fatal shaft its venom quenched in
 thee,
 A mortal raised to immortality.

Child of the humble sod,
 Wed with the breath of God, 10
 Descend! for with the lowest thou
 must lie—
 Arise! thou hast inherited the sky. 25

A Lenten Thought

Alone with Thee, who canst not be
 alone,
 At midnight, in Thine everlasting 30
 day;
 Lo, less than naught, of nothingness
 undone,
 I, prayerless, pray.
 Behold—and with Thy bitterness 35
 make sweet, 5
 What sweetest is in bitterness to
 hide—
 Like Magdalen, I grovel at Thy feet,
 In lowly pride. 40

Smite, till my wounds beneath Thy
 scourging cease;
 Soothe, till my heart in agony hath 10
 bled;
 Nor rest my soul with enmity at
 peace,
 Till Death be dead.

The Fall of the Sparrow

Are you dying, little Bird?
 "Yea; the song so often heard,
 And the gift of suffering,
 Back to God again I bring.
 "All in each, and each in all, 5
 Counting in the Sparrow's fall,
 By the power of sinless pain
 (His and ours) He cleanseth stain.
 Suffering, He deigned to die
 Poor and innocent as I." 10

From *The Poetry of Father Tabb*, Dodd,
 Mead & Co., 1928. By permission of Francis
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THOMAS S. JONES, JR.

The Spirit and the Law

UPON lone mountain-sides they
 stood apart:
 One on immortal stone did
 roughly trace
 Laws that still shape the conscience
 of a race
 As the bright North Star shapes a sea-
 man's chart;
 Then came another, He whose tender
 art
 Moved multitudes to seek through
 time and space
 The brooding Love that craves a
 dwelling-place
 Within the mystery of the human
 heart.
 The grass that blows along the coun-
 try ways,
 The little leaves between the earth
 and sky,
 The deepened lustres of an April
 dove
 Own light the only law of their brief
 days;
 And as in light all colours folded lie,
 The Prophets and the Law are lost
 in Love.

The Three Mothers

Behind man silent stand the mighty
 three:
 The great dim earth whose eager
 life up pressed
 To live a little hour upon her breast,
 Forgetful of its frail mortality;
 And Eve that with the fruit of Eden's
 tree
 Started mankind upon the weary
 quest
 To find once more that long-lost
 place of rest,
 The Garden gained by piteous Cal-
 vary;
 Last the meek Virgin, she who won-
 dering heard
 An angel's voice low on the tranced
 air
 Greet her with heavenly music,
 "Mary, hail!"
 O Holy Mother of the Incarnate
 Word
 Who gave white Christmas to a
 world's despair,
 We kneel to thee, the Lily of death's
 vale.

From *Sonnets of the Cross*, The Mosher Press,
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LOVE LYRICS

ROBERT BURNS

Mary Morison

OMARY, at thy window be,
 It is the wished, the trysted
 hour!
 Those smiles and glances let me see,
 That make the miser's treasure
 poor:

How blithely wad I bide the stoure, 5
 A weary slave frae sun to sun.
 Could I the rich reward secure,
 The lovely Mary Morison.

Yestreen, when to the trembling
 string
 The dance gaed thro' the lighted
 ha', 10

To thee my fancy took its wing,
 I sat, but neither heard nor saw:
 Tho' this was fair, and that was braw,
 And yon the toast of a' the town,
 I sighed, and said amang them a',¹⁵
 "Ye are na Mary Morison."

O Mary, canst thou wreck his peace,
 Wha for thy sake wad gladly die?
 Or canst thou break that heart of his,
 Whase only faut is loving thee?²⁰
 If love for love thou wilt na gie,
 At least be pity to me shown!
 A thought ungente canna be
 The thought o' Mary Morison.

And now I see with eye serene
 The very pulse of the machine;
 A Being breathing thoughtful breath,
 A Traveler between life and death;
 The reason firm, the temperate will,
 Endurance, foresight, strength, and
 skill;²⁶
 A perfect Woman, nobly planned,
 To warn, to comfort, and command;
 And yet a Spirit still, and bright
 With something of angelic light.³⁰

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

The Indian Serenade

I

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

She Was a Phantom of Delight

SHE was a Phantom of delight
 When first she gleamed upon
 my sight;
 A lovely Apparition, sent
 To be a moment's ornament;
 Her eyes as stars of Twilight fair;⁵
 Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
 But all things else about her drawn
 From May-time and the cheerful
 Dawn;
 A dancing Shape, an Image gay,
 To haunt, to startle, and waylay.¹⁰

I saw her upon nearer view,
 A Spirit, yet a Woman too!
 Her household motions light and free,
 And steps of virgin-liberty;
 A countenance in which did meet¹⁵
 Sweet records, promises as sweet;
 A Creature not too bright or good
 For human nature's daily food;
 For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
 Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and
 smiles.²⁰

I ARISE from dreams of thee
 In the first sweet sleep of night,
 When the winds are breathing
 low,
 And the stars are shining bright:
 I arise from dreams of thee,⁵
 And a spirit in my feet
 Hath led me—who knows how?
 To thy chamber window, Sweet!

II

The wandering airs they faint
 On the dark, the silent stream—¹⁰
 The Champak odors fail
 Like sweet thoughts in a dream;
 The nightingale's complaint,
 It dies upon her heart;—
 As I must on thine,¹⁵
 Oh, beloved as thou art!

III

O lift me from the grass!
 I die! I faint! I fail!
 Let thy love in kisses rain
 On my lips and eyelids pale.²⁰

My cheek is cold and white, alas!
 My heart beats loud and fast;—
 Oh! press it to thine own again,
 Where it will break at last.

Love's Philosophy

I

The fountains mingle with the river
 And the rivers with the Ocean,
 The winds of Heaven mix for ever
 With a sweet emotion;
 Nothing in the world is single; 5
 All things by a law divine
 In one spirit meet and mingle.
 Why not I with thine?—

II

See the mountains kiss high Heaven
 And the waves clasp one another; 10
 No sister-flower would be forgiven
 If it disdained its brother;
 And the sunlight clasps the earth
 And the moonbeams kiss the sea:
 What is all this sweet work worth 15
 If thou kiss not me?

JOHN KEATS

Sonnet

BRIGHT star! would I were stead-
 fast as thou art—
 Not in lone splendor hung
 aloft the night,
 And watching, with eternal lids apart,
 Like Nature's patient, sleepless
 Eremite,
 The moving waters at their priestlike
 task 5
 Of pure ablution round earth's
 human shores,

Or gazing on the new soft fallen
 mask
 Of snow upon the mountains and
 the moors—
 No—yet still steadfast, still unchange-
 able,
 Pillowed upon my fair love's ripen-
 ing breast, 10
 To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,
 Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,
 Still, still to hear her tender-taken
 breath,
 And so live ever—or else swoon to
 death.

LORD BYRON

When We Two Parted

WHEN we two parted
 In silence and tears,
 Half broken-hearted
 To sever for years,
 Pale grew thy cheek and cold, 5
 Colder thy kiss;
 Truly that hour foretold
 Sorrow to this.

The dew of the morning
 Sunk chill on my brow— 10
 It felt like the warning
 Of what I feel now.
 Thy vows are all broken,
 And light is thy fame:
 I hear thy name spoken, 15
 And share in its shame.

They name thee before me,
 A knell to mine ear;
 A shudder comes o'er me—
 Why wert thou so dear? 20
 They know not I knew thee,
 Who knew thee too well:—
 Long, long shall I rue thee,
 Too deeply to tell.

In secret we met—
 In silence I grieve,
 That thy heart could forget,
 Thy spirit deceive.
 If I should meet thee
 After long years,
 How should I greet thee?—
 With silence and tears.

Stanzas for Music

There be none of Beauty's daughters
 With a magic like thee;
 And like music on the waters
 Is thy sweet voice to me:
 When, as if its sound were causing
 The charmed ocean's pausing,
 The waves lie still and gleaming,
 And the lulled winds seem dreaming:

And the midnight moon is weaving
 Her bright chain o'er the deep; 10
 Whose breast is gently heaving,
 As an infant's asleep:
 So the spirit bows before thee,
 To listen and adore thee;
 With a full but soft emotion, 15
 Like the swell of Summer's ocean.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

Lovesight

WHEN do I see thee most, be-
 loved one?
 When in the light the spirits
 of mine eyes
 Before thy face, their altar, so-
 lemnize
 The worship of that Love through
 thee made known?

25 Or when in the dusk hours (we two
 alone), 5
 Close-kissed and eloquent of still re-
 plies
 Thy twilight-hidden glimmering
 30 visage lies,
 And my soul only sees thy soul its
 own?

O love, my love! if I no more should
 see
 Thyself, nor on the earth the shadow
 of thee, 10
 Nor image of thine eyes in any
 spring,—
 How then should sound upon Life's
 darkening slope
 The ground-whirl of the perished
 leaves of Hope,
 The wind of Death's imperishable
 wing?

Mid-Rapture

Thou lovely and beloved, thou my
 love;
 Whose kiss seems still the first;
 whose summoning eyes,
 Even now, as for our love-world's
 new sunrise,
 Shed very dawn; whose voice, attuned
 above
 All modulation of the deep-bowered
 dove, 5
 Is like a hand laid softly on the
 soul;
 Whose hand is like a sweet voice to
 control
 Those worn tired brows it hath the
 keeping of:—
 What word can answer to thy word,
 —what gaze
 To thine, which now absorbs with-
 in its sphere 10

My worshipping face, till I am mirrored there
 Light-circled in a heaven of deep-drawn rays?
 What clasp, what kiss mine inmost heart can prove,
 O lovely and beloved, O my love?

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

A Birthday

My heart is like a singing bird
 Whose nest is in a watered shoot;
 My heart is like an apple-tree
 Whose boughs are bent with thick-set fruit;
 My heart is like a rainbow shell 5
 That paddles in a halcyon sea;
 My heart is gladder than all these
 Because my love is come to me.

Raise me a dais of silk and down; 9
 Hang it with vair and purple dyes;
 Carve it in doves and pomegranates,
 And peacocks with a hundred eyes;
 Work it in gold and silver grapes,
 In leaves and silver fleurs-de-lys;
 Because the birthday of my life 15
 Is come, my love is come to me.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

If Thou Must Love Me

If thou must love me, let it be for nought
 Except for love's sake only. Do not say
 'I love her for her smile . . . her look
 . . . her way
 Of speaking gently, . . . for a trick
 of thought

That falls in well with mine, and certes brought 5
 A sense of pleasant ease on such a day'—
 For these things in themselves, Belovèd, may
 Be changed, or change for thee,—and love, so wrought
 May be unwrought so. Neither love me for
 Thine own dear pity's wiping my cheeks dry,— 10
 A creature might forget to weep, who bore
 Thy comfort long, and lose thy love thereby!
 But love me for love's sake, that evermore
 Thou mayst love on, through love's eternity.

JOSEPH AUSLANDER

*Sonnet for Svanhild*¹

COME, let us march seven times
 Death's dark walls round,
 And sing our songs and step
 with quick sharp tread,
 And with our bright breath blow
 them to the ground,
 And shout and crown Love king and cry Death dead!
 O let us twist a wreath for his dear head, 5
 And drench it in his dew, and with the sound
 Of doves and flutes O wipe the gash that bled,
 And press wet cloth and pour balm on the wound!

¹ Published, 1931, as the dedication for the Sonnets of Petrarch. By permission of the author.

For it is Spring, and Love is once
 more lord,
 And from the dust of death the white
 brief bud 10
 Breaks through, and from the red hilt
 of his sword

A rose will flash out like a drop of
 blood!
 What walls can stand, though Death
 builds deep and strong,
 When Love strides seven times round
 with storms of song!

NATURE LYRICS

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

To the Cuckoo

O BLITHE New-comer! I have
 heard,
 I hear thee and rejoice.
 O Cuckoo! shall I call thee Bird,
 Or but a wandering Voice?

While I am lying on the grass 5
 Thy twofold shout I hear;
 From hill to hill it seems to pass
 At once far off, and near.

Though babbling only to the Vale,
 Of sunshine and of flowers, 10
 Thou bringest unto me a tale
 Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the
 Spring!
 Even yet thou art to me
 No bird, but an invisible thing, 15
 A voice, a mystery;

The same whom in my schools days
 I listened to; that Cry
 Which made me look a thousand
 ways
 In bush, and tree, and sky. 20

To seek these did I often rove
 Through woods and on the green;
 And thou wert still a hope, a love;
 Still longed for, never seen.

And I can listen to thee yet; 25
 Can lie upon the plain
 And listen, till I do beget
 That golden time again.

O blessed Bird! the earth we pace
 Again appears to be 30
 An unsubstantial, faery place;
 That is fit home for Thee!

ROBERT BRIDGES

London Snow

WHEN men were all asleep the
 snow came flying,
 In large white flakes falling
 on the city brown,
 Stealthily and perpetually settling and
 loosely lying,
 Hushing the latest traffic of the
 drowsy town;
 Deadening, muffling, stifling its mur-
 murs failing; 5
 Lazily and incessantly floating down
 and down:
 Silently sifting and veiling road,
 roof and railing;
 Hiding difference, making uneven-
 ness even,
 Into angles and crevices softly drifting
 and sailing.
 All night it fell, and when full
 inches seven 10

It lay in the depth of its uncompacted
 lightness,
 The clouds blew off from a high and
 frosty heaven;
 And all woke earlier for the unac-
 customed brightness
 Of the winter dawning, the strange
 unheavenly glare:
 The eye marveled—marveled at the
 dazzling whiteness; 15
 The ear hearkened to the stillness
 of the solemn air;
 No sound of wheel rumbling nor of
 foot falling,
 And the busy morning cries came
 thin and spare.
 Then boys I heard, as they went to
 school, calling,
 They gathered up the crystal manna
 to freeze 20
 Their tongues with tasting, their
 hands with snowballing;
 Or rioted in a drift, plunging up to
 the knees;
 Or peering up from under the white-
 mossed wonder,
 "O look at the trees!" they cried, "O
 look at the trees!"
 With lessened load a few carts creak
 and blunder, 25
 Following along the white deserted
 way,
 A country company long dispersed
 asunder:
 When now already the sun, in pale
 display
 Standing by Paul's high dome, spread
 forth below
 His sparkling beams, and awoke the
 stir of the day. 30
 For now doors open, and war is
 waged with the snow;
 And trains of somber men, past tale
 of number,

Tread long brown paths, as toward
 their toil they go:
 But even for them awhile no cares
 encumber
 Their minds diverted; the daily word
 is unspoken, 35
 The daily thoughts of labor and sor-
 row slumber
 At the sight of the beauty that greets
 them, for the charm they have
 broken.

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE

Autumn in Cornwall

THE year lies fallen and faded
 On cliffs by clouds invaded,
 With tongues of storms up-
 braided,
 With wrath of waves bedinned;
 And inland, wild with warning, 5
 As in deaf ears or scorning,
 The clarion even and morning
 Rings of the south-west wind.

The wild bents wane and wither
 In blasts whose breath bows hither 10
 Their grey-grown heads and thither,
 Unblest of rain or sun;
 The pale fierce heavens are crowded
 With shapes like dreams beclouded,
 As though the old year enshrouded 15
 Lay, long ere life were done.

Full charged with oldworld wonders,
 From dusk Tintagel thunders
 A note that smites and sunders
 The hard frore fields of air; 20
 A trumpet stormier-sounded
 Than once from lists rebounded

When strong men sense-confounded
Fell thick in tourney there.

From scarce a duskier dwelling 25
Such notes of wail rose welling
Through the outer darkness, telling
In the awful singer's ears
What souls the darkness covers,
What love-lost souls of lovers, 30
Whose cry still hangs and hovers
In each man's born that hears.

For there by Hector's brother
And yet some thousand other
He that had grief to mother, 35
Passed pale from Dante's sight;
With one fast linked as fearless,
Perchance, there only tearless;
Iseult and Tristram, peerless
And perfect queen and knight. 40

A shrill-winged sound comes flying
North, as of wild souls crying
The cry of things undying,
That know what life must be;
Or as the old year's heart, stricken 45
Too sore for hope to quicken
By thoughts like thorns that thicken,
Broke, breaking with the sea.

ROBERT FROST

*Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*¹

WHOSE woods these are I think
I know.
His house is in the village
though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with
snow.

My little horse must think it queer 5
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake. 10
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep.
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep, 15
And miles to go before I sleep.

¹ From *New Hampshire*, copyright, 1923, Henry Holt and Company. By permission of the publishers.

JOHN MASEFIELD

*Sea-Fever*²

I MUST go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by;
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's
shaking,
And a gray mist on the sea's face, and a gray dawn breaking.

I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide 5
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.

² From John Masefield, *Collected Poems*. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant gipsy life,
 To the gull's way and the whale's way, where the wind's like a whetted
 knife;
 And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,
 And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.

ROBERT P. TRISTRAM
 COFFIN

*Strange Holiness*¹

THERE is strange holiness around
 Our common days on com-
 mon ground.

I have heard it in the birds
 Whose voices reach above all words,
 Going upward, bars on bars,
 Until they sound as high as stars.
 I have seen it in the snake,
 A flowing jewel in the brake.
 It has sparkled in my eyes
 In luminous breath of fireflies.
 I have come upon its track
 Where trilliums curled their petals
 back.

I have seen it flash in under
 The towers of the midnight thunder.
 Once, I met it face to face
 In a fox pressed by the chase.
 He came down the road on feet,
 Quiet and fragile, light as heat.
 He had a fish still wet and bright
 In his slender jaws held tight.
 His ears were conscious whetted
 darts,

His eyes had small flames in their
 hearts.

The preciousness of life and breath
 Glowed through him as he outran
 death.

Strangeness and secrecy and pride

Ran rippling down his golden hide.
 His beauty was not meant for me,
 With my dull eyes, so close to see.
 Unconscious of me, rapt, alone,
 He came, and then stopped still as
 stone.

His eyes went out as in a gust,
 His beauty crumbled into dust.
 There was but a ruin there,
 A hunted creature, stripped and
 bare.

Then he faded at one stroke,
 Like a dingy, melting smoke.
 But there his fish lay like a key
 To the bright lost mystery.

MARK VAN DOREN

*After Dry Weather*²

IF the people under that portico
 Are happy, and point at the pat-
 tering drops;
 If barehead boys are parading below
 Musical eaves of tall house-tops;

If you lean out of the window here,
 Contented so with the pavement's
 shine,
 And laugh as the covers of cabs ap-
 pear
 With passengers in them dressed to
 dine;

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 mission of the author.

² From *7 P. M. and Other Poems*, A. & C.
 Boni. By permission of the author.

| | |
|---|---|
| If all of the stones that we can see | I am certain the clover has lifted its head |
| Are licking their lips, that waited so long— | For dark, intemperate draughts of rain . . . |
| A meadow I know to the north of me | Once even I thought I had heard the tread |
| By a hundred miles has caught the song. | Of a plunging horse with a sodden mane. |

D R A M A T I C L Y R I C S

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

Ulysses

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Ir little profits that an idle king, By this still hearth, among these barren crags, Matched with an agéd wife, I mete and dole Unequal laws unto a savage race, That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me. I cannot rest from travel; I will drink Life to the lees. All times I have enjoyed Greatly, have suffered greatly, both with those That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when Through scudding drifts the rainy Hyades Vexed the dim sea. I am become a name; For always roaming with a hungry heart Much have I seen and known,—cities of men And manners, climates, councils, gov- ernments, Myself not least, but honored of them all,—</p> | <p>And drunk delight of battle with my peers, Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy. I am a part of all that I have met; Yet all experience is an arch where- through Gleams that untraveled world whose margin fades For ever and for ever when I move. How dull it is to pause, to make an end, To rust unburnished, not to shine in use! As though to breathe were life! Life piled on life Were all too little, and of one to me Little remains; but every hour is saved From that eternal silence, something more, A bringer of new things; and vile it were For some three suns to store and hoard myself, And this gray spirit yearning in de- sire To follow knowledge like a sinking star, Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.</p> |
|---|---|

This is my son, mine own Telema-
 chus,
 To whom I leave the scepter and the
 isle,—
 Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
 This labor, by slow prudence to make
 mild 36
 A rugged people, and through soft
 degrees
 Subdue them to the useful and the
 good.
 Most blameless is he, centered in the
 sphere
 Of common duties, decent not to fail
 In offices of tenderness, and pay 41
 Meet adoration to my household gods,
 When I am gone. He works his
 work, I mine.
 There lies the port; the vessel puffs
 her sail;
 There gloom the dark, broad seas.
 My mariners, 45
 Souls that have toiled, and wrought,
 and thought with me,—
 That ever with a frolic welcome took
 The thunder and the sunshine, and
 opposed
 Free hearts, free foreheads,—you and
 I are old;
 Old age hath yet his honor and his
 toil. 50
 Death closes all; but something ere
 the end,
 Some work of noble note, may yet be
 done,
 Not unbecoming men that strove with
 Gods.
 The lights begin to twinkle from the
 rocks;
 The long day wanes; the slow moon
 climbs; the deep 55
 Moans round with many voices.
 Come, my friends.
 'Tis not too late to seek a newer
 world.

Push off, and sitting well in order
 smite
 The sounding furrows; for my pur-
 pose holds
 To sail beyond the sunset, and the
 baths 60
 Of all the western stars, until I die.
 It may be that the gulfs will wash us
 down;
 It may be we shall touch the Happy
 Isles,
 And see the great Achilles, whom we
 knew.
 Though much is taken, much abides;
 and though 65
 We are not now that strength which
 in old days
 Moved earth and heaven, that which
 we are, we are,—
 One equal temper of heroic hearts,
 Made weak by time and fate, but
 strong in will
 To strive, to seek, to find, and not to
 yield. 70

ROBERT BROWNING.

My Last Duchess

FERRARA

THAT's my last Duchess painted
 on the wall,
 Looking as if she were alive.
 I call
 That piece a wonder, now: Fra Pan-
 dolf's hands
 Worked busily a day, and there she
 stands.
 Will't please you sit and look at her?
 I said 5
 "Fra Pandolf" by design, for never
 read
 Strangers like you that pictured coun-
 tenance,

The depth and passion of its earnest
 glance,
 But to myself they turned (since none
 puts by
 The curtain I have drawn for you,
 but I) ¹⁰
 And seemed as they would ask me, if
 they durst,
 How such a glance came there; so,
 not the first
 Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir,
 'twas not
 Her husband's presence only, called
 that spot
 Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: per-
 haps ¹⁵
 Fra Pandolf chanced to say, "Her
 mantle laps
 Over my lady's wrist too much," or
 "Paint
 Must never hope to reproduce the
 faint
 Half-flush that dies along her throat":
 such stuff
 Was courtesy, she thought, and cause
 enough ²⁰
 For calling up that spot of joy. She
 had
 A heart—how shall I say?—too soon
 made glad,
 Too easily impressed: she liked what-
 e'er
 She looked on, and her looks went
 everywhere.
 Sir, 'twas all one! My favor at her
 breast, ²⁵
 The dropping of the daylight in the
 West,
 The bough of cherries some officious
 fool
 Broke in the orchard for her, the
 white mule
 She rode with round the terrace—all
 and each

Would draw from her alike the ap-
 proving speech, ³⁰
 Or blush, at least. She thanked men,
 —good! but thanked
 Somehow—I know not how—as if
 she ranked
 My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old
 name
 With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to
 blame
 This sort of trifling? Even had you
 skill ³⁵
 In speech—(which I have not)—to
 make your will
 Quite clear to such an one, and say,
 "Just this
 Or that in you disgusts me; here you
 miss,
 Or there exceed the mark"—and if
 she let
 Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
 Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made
 excuse, ⁴¹
 —E'en then would be some stooping;
 and I choose
 Never to stoop. Oh sir, she smiled,
 no doubt,
 Whene'er I passed her; but who
 passed without
 Much the same smile? This grew; I
 gave commands; ⁴⁵
 Then all smiles stopped together.
 There she stands
 As if alive. Will 't please you rise?
 We'll meet
 The company below, then. I repeat
 The Count your master's known
 munificence
 Is ample warrant that no just pretense
 Of mine for dowry will be dis-
 allowed; ⁵¹
 Though his fair daughter's self, as I
 avowed
 At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll
 go

Together down, sir. Notice Neptune,
 tune, though,
 Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
 Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in
 bronze for me! 56

ROBERT FROST

*The Death of the Hired Man*¹

MARY sat musing on the lamp-
 flame at the table
 Waiting for Warren. When
 she heard his step,
 She ran on tip-toe down the darkened
 passage
 To meet him in the doorway with
 the news
 And put him on his guard. "Silas is
 back." 5
 She pushed him outward with her
 through the door
 And shut it after her. "Be kind,"
 she said
 She took the market things from
 Warren's arms
 And set them on the porch, then drew
 him down
 To sit beside her on the wooden
 steps. 10

"When was I ever anything but kind
 to him?
 But I'll not have the fellow back," he
 said.
 'I told him so last haying, didn't I?
 'If he left then,' I said, 'that ended it.'
 What good is he? Who else will
 harbor him 15
 At his age for the little he can do?
 What help he is there's no depending
 on.

¹ From *North of Boston*, copyright, 1914, by
 Henry Holt and Company. By permission of
 the publishers.

Off he goes always when I need him
 most.
 'He thinks he ought to earn a little
 pay,
 Enough at least to buy tobacco with,
 So he won't have to beg and be be-
 holden.' 21
 'All right,' I say, 'I can't afford to pay
 Any fixed wages, though I wish I
 could.'
 'Some one else can.' 'Then some one
 else will have to.'
 I shouldn't mind his bettering him-
 self 25
 If that was what it was. You can be
 certain,
 When he begins like that, there's
 some one at him
 Trying to coax him off with pocket-
 money,—
 In haying time, when any help is
 scarce.
 In winter he comes back to us. I'm
 done." 30

"Sh! not so loud: he'll hear you,"
 Mary said.

"I want him to: he'll have to soon or
 late."

"He's worn out. He's asleep beside
 the stove.
 When I came up from Rowe's I
 found him here,
 Huddled against the barn-door fast
 asleep, 35
 A miserable sight, and frightening,
 too—
 You needn't smile—I didn't recognize
 him—
 I wasn't looking for him—and he's
 changed.
 Wait till you see."

"Where did you say he'd
 been?"
 "He didn't say. I dragged him to the
 house,⁴⁰
 And gave him tea and tried to make
 him smoke.
 I tried to make him talk about his
 travels.
 Nothing would do: he just kept nod-
 ding off."
 "What did he say? Did he say any-
 thing?"
 "But little."
 "Anything? Mary, con-
 fess⁴⁵
 He said he'd come to ditch the
 meadow for me."
 "Warren!"
 "But did he? I just want
 to know."
 "Of course he did. What would you
 have him say?
 Surely you wouldn't grudge the poor
 old man
 Some humble way to save his self-
 respect.⁵⁰
 He added, if you really care to know,
 He meant to clear the upper pasture,
 too.
 That sounds like something you have
 heard before?
 Warren, I wish you could have heard
 the way
 He jumbled everything. I stopped to
 look⁵⁵
 Two or three times—he made me feel
 so queer—
 To see if he was talking in his sleep.
 He ran on Harold Wilson—you re-
 member—

The boy you had in haying four years
 since.
 He's finished school, and teaching in
 his college.⁶⁰
 Silas declares you'll have to get him
 back.
 He says they two will make a team
 for work:
 Between them they will lay this farm
 as smooth!
 The way he mixed that in with other
 things.
 He thinks young Wilson a likely lad,
 though daft⁶⁵
 On education—you know how they
 fought
 All through July under the blazing
 sun,
 Silas up on the cart to build the load,
 Harold along beside to pitch it on."
 "Yes, I took care to keep well out of
 earshot."⁷⁰
 "Well, those days trouble Silas like a
 dream.
 You wouldn't think they would.
 How some things linger!
 Harold's young college boy's assur-
 ance piqued him.
 After so many years he still keeps
 finding
 Good arguments he sees he might
 have used.⁷⁵
 I sympathize. I know just how it
 feels
 To think of the right thing to say too
 late.
 Harold's associated in his mind with
 Latin.
 He asked me what I thought of
 Harold's saying
 He studied Latin like the violin⁸⁰
 Because he liked it—that an argu-
 ment!

He said he couldn't make the boy
believe
He could find water with a hazel
prong—
Which showed how much good
school had ever done him.
He wanted to go over that. But
most of all⁸⁵
He thinks if he could have another
chance
To teach him how to build a load of
hay—"

"I know, that's Silas' one accomplish-
ment.
He bundles every forkful in its
place,
And tags and numbers it for future
reference,⁹⁰
So he can find and easily dislodge it
In the unloading. Silas does that
well.
He takes it out in bunches like big
birds' nests.
You never see him standing on the
hay
He's trying to lift, straining to lift
himself."⁹⁵

"He thinks if he could teach him that,
he'd be
Some good perhaps to some one in
the world.
He hates to see a boy the fool of
books.
Poor Silas, so concerned for other
folk,
And nothing to look backward to
with pride,¹⁰⁰
And nothing to look forward to with
hope,
So now and never any different."

Part of a moon was falling down the
west,

Dragging the whole sky with it to the
hills.
Its light poured softly in her lap. She
saw¹⁰⁵
And spread her apron to it. She put
out her hand
Among the harp-like morning-glory
strings,
Taut with the dew from garden bed
to eaves,
As if she played unheard the tender-
ness
That wrought on him beside her in
the night.¹¹⁰
"Warren," she said, "he has come
home to die:
You needn't be afraid he'll leave you
this time."

"Home," he mocked gently.

"Yes, what else but home?
It all depends on what you mean by
home.
Of course he's nothing to us, any
more¹¹⁵
Than was the hound that came a
stranger to us
Out of the woods, worn out upon the
trail."

"Home is the place where, when you
have to go there,
They have to take you in."

"I should have called it
Something you somehow haven't to
deserve."¹²⁰

Warren leaned out and took a step or
two,
Picked up a little stick, and brought it
back
And broke it in his hand and tossed
it by.

"Silas has better claim on us you think
Than on his brother? Thirteen little
miles

125

As the road winds would bring him
to his door.

Silas has walked that far no doubt to-
day.

Why didn't he go there? His
brother's rich,

A somebody—director in the bank."

"He never told us that."

"We know it though."

"I think his brother ought to help, of
course.

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I'll see to that if there is need. He
ought of right

To take him in, and might be will-
ing to—

He may be better than appearances.

But have some pity on Silas. Do you
think

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If he'd had any pride in claiming
kin

Or anything he looked for from his
brother,

He'd keep so still about him all this
time?"

"I wonder what's between them."

"I can tell you.

Silas is what he is—we wouldn't
mind him—

140

But just the kind that kinsfolk can't
abide.

He never did a thing so very bad.

He don't know why he isn't quite as
good

As any one. He won't be made
ashamed

To please his brother, worthless
though he is."

145

"I can't think Si ever hurt any one."

"No, but he hurt my heart the way
he lay

And rolled his old head on that
sharp-edged chair-back.

He wouldn't let me put him on the
lounge.

You must go in and see what you can
do.

150

I made the bed up for him there to-
night.

You'll be surprised at him—how
much he's broken.

His working days are done; I'm sure
of it."

"I'd not be in a hurry to say that."

"I haven't been. Go, look, see for
yourself.

155

But, Warren, please remember how it
is:

He's come to help you ditch the
meadow.

He has a plan. You mustn't laugh at
him.

He may not speak of it, and then he
may.

I'll sit and see if that small sailing
cloud

160

Will hit or miss the moon."

It hit the moon.

Then there were three there, making
a dim row,

The moon, the little silver cloud, and
she.

Warren returned—too soon, it seemed
to her,

Slipped to her side, caught up her
hand and waited.

165

"Warren," she questioned.

"Dead," was all he answered.

ELEGIES

MATTHEW ARNOLD

Rugby Chapel

NOVEMBER, 1857

COLDLY, sadly descends
The autumn-evening. The
field

Strewn with its dank yellow drifts
Of withered leaves, and the elms,
Fade into dimness apace, 5
Silent;—hardly a shout
From a few boys late at their play!
The lights come out in the street,
In the school-room windows;—but
cold,

Solemn, unlighted, austere, 10
Through the gathering darkness, arise
The chapel-walls, in whose bound
Thou, my father! art laid.

There thou dost lie, in the gloom
Of the autumn evening. But ah! 15
That word, *gloom*, to my mind
Brings thee back, in the light
Of thy radiant vigor, again;
In the gloom of November we passed
Days not dark at thy side; 20
Seasons impaired not the ray
Of thy buoyant cheerfulness clear.
Such thou wast! and I stand
In the autumn evening, and think
Of bygone autumns with thee. 25

Fifteen years have gone round
Since thou arosest to tread,
In the summer-morning, the road
Of death, at a call unforeseen,
Sudden. For fifteen years, 30
We who till then in thy shade
Rested as under the boughs

Of a mighty oak, have endured
Sunshine and rain as we might,
Bare, unshaded, alone, 35
Lacking the shelter of thee.

O strong soul, by what shore
Tarriest thou now? For that force,
Surely, has not been left vain!
Somewhere, surely, afar, 40
In the sounding labor-house vast
Of being, is practiced that strength,
Zealous, beneficent, firm!

Yes, in some far-shining sphere,
Conscious or not of the past, 45
Still thou performest the word
Of the Spirit in whom thou dost
live—

Prompt, unwearied, as here!
Still thou upraisest with zeal
The humble good from the ground,
Sternly represses the bad! 51
Still, like a trumpet, dost rouse
Those who with half-open eyes
Tread the border-land dim
'Twixt vice and virtue; reviv'st, 55
Succorest!—this was thy work,
This was thy life upon earth.

What is the course of the life
Of mortal men on the earth?—
Most men eddy about 60
Here and there—eat and drink,
Chatter and love and hate,
Gather and squander, are raised
Aloft, are hurled in the dust,
Striving, blindly, achieving 65
Nothing; and then they die—
Perish;—and no one asks
Who or what they have been,

More than he asks what waves,
 In the moonlit solitudes mild 70
 Of the midmost Ocean, have swelled,
 Foamed for a moment, and gone.

And there are some, whom a thirst
 Ardent, unquenchable, fires,
 Not with the crowd to be spent, 75
 Not without aim to go round
 In an eddy of purposeless dust,
 Effort unmeaning and vain.
 Ah yes! some of us strive
 Not without action to die 80
 Fruitless, but something to snatch
 From dull oblivion, nor all
 Glut the devouring grave!
 We, we have chosen our path—
 Path to a clear-purposed goal, 85
 Path of advance!—but it leads
 A long, steep journey, through sunk
 Gorges, o'er mountains in snow.
 Cheerful, with friends, we set forth—
 Then, on the height, comes the storm.
 Thunder crashes from rock 91
 To rock, the cataracts reply,
 Lightnings dazzle our eyes.
 Roaring torrents have breached
 The track, the stream-bed descends 95
 In the place where the wayfarer once
 Planted his footstep—the spray
 Boils o'er its borders! aloft
 The unseen snow-beds dislodge
 Their hanging ruin; alas, 100
 Havoc is made in our train!
 Friends, who set forth at our side,
 Falter, are lost in the storm.
 We, we only are left! 104
 With frowning foreheads, with lips
 Sternly compressed, we strain on,
 On—and at nightfall at last
 Come to the end of our way,
 To the lonely inn 'mid the rocks;
 Where the gaunt and taciturn host 110
 Stands on the threshold, the wind
 Shaking his thin white hairs—

Holds his lantern to scan
 Our storm-beat figures, and asks:
 Whom in our party we bring? 115
 Whom we have left in the snow?

Sadly we answer. We bring
 Only ourselves! we lost
 Sight of the rest in the storm. 119
 Hardly ourselves we fought through,
 Stripped, without friends, as we are.
 Friends, companions, and train,
 The avalanche swept from our side.

But thou wouldst not *alone*
 Be saved, my father! *alone* 125
 Conquer and come to thy goal,
 Leaving the rest in the wild.
 We were weary, and we
 Fearful, and we in our march
 Fain to drop down and to die. 130
 Still thou turnedst, and still
 Beckonedst the trembler, and still
 Gavest the weary thy hand.

If, in the paths of the world,
 Stones might have wounded thy feet,
 Toil or dejection have tried 136
 Thy spirit, of that we saw
 Nothing—to us thou wast still
 Cheerful, and helpful, and firm!
 Therefore to thee it was given 140
 Many to save with thyself;
 And, at the end of thy day,
 O faithful shepherd; to come,
 Bringing thy sheep in thy hand.

And through thee I believe 145
 In the noble and great who are gone;
 Pure souls honored and blest
 By former ages, who else—
 Such, so soulless, so poor,
 Is the race of men whom I see— 150
 Seemed but a dream of the heart,
 Seemed but a cry of desire.
 Yes! I believe that there lived

Others like thee in the past,
 Not like the men of the crowd 155
 Who all round me to-day
 Bluster or cringe, and make life
 Hideous, and arid, and vile;
 But souls tempered with fire,
 Fervent, heroic, and good 160
 Helpers and friends of mankind.

Servants of God!—or sons
 Shall I not call you? because
 Not as servants ye knew
 Your Father's innermost mind, 165
 His, who unwillingly sees
 One of his little ones lost—
 Yours is the praise, if mankind
 Hath not as yet in its march
 Fainted, and fallen, and died! 170

See! In the rocks of the world
 Marches the host of mankind,
 A feeble, wavering line.
 Where are they tending?—A God
 Marshaled them, gave them their 175
 goal.

Ah, but the way is so long!
 Years they have been in the wild!
 Sore thirst plagues them; the rocks,
 Rising all round, overawe;
 Factions divide them, their host 180
 Threatens to break, to dissolve.
 —Ah! keep, keep them combined!
 Else, of the myriads who fill
 That army, not one shall arrive;
 Sole they shall stray; in the rocks 185
 Stagger for ever in vain,
 Die one by one in the waste.

Then, in such hour of need
 Of your fainting, dispirited race,
 Ye, like angels, appear, 190
 Radiant with ardor divine!
 Beacons of hope, ye appear!
 Languor is not in your heart,
 Weakness is not in your word,

Weariness not on your brow. 195
 Ye alight in our van! at your voice,
 Panic, despair, flee away.
 Ye move through the ranks, recall
 The stragglers, refresh the outworn,
 Praise, re-inspire the brave! 200
 Order, courage, return.
 Eyes rekindling, and prayers,
 Follow your steps as ye go.
 Ye fill up the gaps in our files,
 Strengthen the wavering line, 205
 Stablish, continue our march,
 On, to the bound of the waste,
 On, to the City of God.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

My Sister's Sleep

SHE fell asleep on Christmas Eve.
 At length the long-ungranted
 shade
 Of weary eyelids overweighed
 The pain nought else might yet re-
 lieve.

Our mother, who had leaned all day 5
 Over the bed from chime to chime,
 Then raised herself for the first
 time,
 And as she sat her down, did pray.

Her little work-table was spread
 With work to finish. For the glare
 Made by her candle, she had care 11
 To work some distance from the bed.

Without, there was a cold moon up,
 Of winter radiance sheer and thin;
 The hollow halo it was in 15
 Was like an icy crystal cup.

Through the small room, with subtle
 sound
 Of flame, by vents the fireshine
 drove

And reddened. In its dim alcove
The mirror shed a clearness round. 20

I had been sitting up some nights,
And my tired mind felt weak and
blank;
Like a sharp strengthening wine it
drank

The stillness and the broken lights.

Twelve struck. That sound, by
dwindling years 25
Heard in each hour, crept off; and
then

The ruffled silence spread again,
Like water that a pebble stirs.

Our mother rose from where she sat:
Her needles, as she laid them down,
Met lightly, and her silken gown 31
Settled: no other noise than that.

"Glory unto the Newly Born!"
So, as said angels, she did say;
Because we were in Christmas Day,
Though it would still be long till
morn. 36

Just then in the room over us
There was a pushing back of chairs,
As some who had sat unawares
So late, now heard the hour, and rose.

With anxious softly-stepping haste 41
Our mother went where Margaret
lay,

Fearing the sounds o'erhead—
should they
Have broken her long watched-for
rest!

She stooped an instant, calm, and
turned; 45

But suddenly turned back again;
And all her features seemed in pain
With woe, and her eyes gazed and
yearned.

For my part, I but hid my face,
And held my breath, and spoke no
word: 50

There was none spoken; but I heard
The silence for a little space.

Our mother bowed herself and wept:
And both my arms fell, and I said,
"God knows I knew that she was
dead." 55

And there, all white, my sister slept.

Then kneeling, upon Christmas morn
A little after twelve o'clock,
We said, ere the first quarter struck,
"Christ's blessing on the newly
born!" 60

VACHEL LINDSAY

*The Eagle That Is Forgotten*¹

(John P. Altgeld. Born December 30, 1847; died March 12, 1902)

SLEEP softly . . . eagle forgotten . . . under the stone.
Time has its way with you there, and the clay has its own.

"We have buried him now," thought your foes, and in secret rejoiced.
They made a brave show of their mourning, their hatred unvoiced.

¹ From *Collected Poems* by Vachel Lindsay. By permission of The Macmillan Company, publishers.

They had snarled at you, barked at you, foamed at you day after day, 5
Now you were ended. They praised you, . . . and laid you away.

The others that mourned you in silence and terror and truth,
The widow bereft of her crust, and the boy without youth,
The mocked and the scorned and the wounded, the lame and the poor
That should have remembered forever, . . . remember no more. 10

Where are those lovers of yours, on what name do they call
The lost, that in armies wept over your funeral pall?
They call on the names of a hundred high-valiant ones,
A hundred white eagles have risen the sons of your sons,
The zeal in their wings is a zeal that your dreaming began 15
The valor that wore out your soul in the service of man.

Sleep softly, . . . eagle forgotten, . . . under the stone,
Time has its way with you there and the clay has its own.
Sleep on, O brave-hearted, O wise man, that kindled the flame—
To live in mankind is far more than to live in a name, 20
To live in mankind, far, far more . . . than to live in a name.

ODES

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Ode to Duty

S^{TERN} Daughter of the Voice of
God!

O Duty! if that name thou love
Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring, and reprove;
Thou, who art victory and law 5
When empty terrors overawe;
From vain temptations dost set free;
And calm'st the weary strife of frail
humanity!

There are who ask not if thine eye
Be on them; who, in love and truth,
Where no misgiving is, rely 11
Upon the genial sense of youth:

Glad Hearts! without reproach or
blot;

Who do thy work, and know it
not:

Oh! if through confidence misplaced
They fail, thy saving arms, dread
Power! around them cast. 16

Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security. 20
And they a blissful course may
hold

Even now, who, not unwisely bold,
Live in the spirit of this creed;
Yet seek thy firm support, according
to their need.

I, loving freedom, and untried; 25
 No sport of every random gust,
 Yet being to myself a guide,
 Too blindly have reposed my trust:
 And oft, when in my heart was
 heard
 Thy timely mandate, I deferred 30
 The task, in smoother walks to stray;
 But thee I now would serve more
 strictly, if I may.

Through no disturbance of my soul,
 Or strong compunction in me
 wrought,
 I supplicate for thy control; 35
 But in the quietness of thought:
 Me this unchartered freedom tires;
 I feel the weight of chance-desires:
 My hopes no more must change their
 name,
 I long for a repose that ever is the
 same. 40

Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
 The Godhead's most benignant grace;
 Nor know we anything so fair
 As is the smile upon thy face:
 Flowers laugh before thee on their
 beds 45
 And fragrance in thy footing treads;
 Thou dost preserve the stars from
 wrong;
 And the most ancient heavens,
 through Thee, are fresh and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power!
 I call thee: I myself commend 51
 Unto thy guidance from this hour;
 Oh, let my weakness have an end!
 Give unto me, made lowly wise,
 The spirit of self-sacrifice; 55
 The confidence of reason give;
 And in the light of truth thy Bond-
 man let me live!

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Ode to the West Wind

I

O WILD West Wind, thou breath
 of Autumn's being,
 Thou, from whose unseen
 presence the leaves dead
 Are driven, like ghosts from an en-
 chanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and
 hectic red,
 Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O
 thou, 5
 Who chariotest to their dark wintry
 bed

The wingéd seeds, where they lie
 cold and low,
 Each like a corpse within its grave,
 until
 Thine azure sister of the Spring shall
 blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth,
 and fill 10
 (Driving sweet buds like flocks to
 feed in air)
 With living hues and odors plain and
 hill:

Wild Spirit, which art moving every-
 where;
 Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh,
 hear!

II

Thou on whose stream, 'mid the
 steep sky's commotion, 15
 Loose clouds like earth's decaying
 leaves are shed,
 Shook from the tangled boughs of
 Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning: there
are spread
On the blue surface of thine aëry
surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the
head 20

Cleave themselves into chasms, while
far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods
which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean,
know 40

Of some fierce Mænad, even from the
dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height,
The locks of the approaching storm.
Thou dirge

Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray
with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves:
oh, hear!

Of the dying year, to which this
closing night 24
Will be the dome of a vast sepulcher,
Vaulted with all thy congregated
might

Of vapors, from whose solid atmos-
phere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will
burst: oh, hear!

IV
If I were a dead leaf thou mightest
bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with
thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power,
and share 45

The impulse of thy strength, only less
free
Than thou, O uncontrollable! If
even
I were as in my boyhood, and could
be

III
Thou who didst waken from his
summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he
lay, 30
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline
streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baïæ's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and
towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser
day,

Ali overgrown with azure moss and
flowers 35
So sweet, the sense faints picturing
them! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level
powers

The comrade of thy wanderings over
Heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skyey
speed 50
Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er
have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my
sore need.
Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a
cloud!

I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!
A heavy weight of hours has chained
and bowed 55
One too like thee: tameless, and swift,
and proud.

v

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest
is:

What if my leaves are falling like its
own!

The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal
tone, 60

Sweet though in sadness. Be thou,
Spirit fierce,

My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous
one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the
universe

Like withered leaves to quicken a
new birth! 64

And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished
hearth

Ashes and sparks, my words among
mankind!

Be through my lips to unawakened
earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O,
Wind,

If Winter comes, can Spring be far
behind? 70

JOHN KEATS

Ode on a Grecian Urn

THOU still unravished bride of
quietness,

Thou foster-child of silence
and slow time,

Sylvan historian, who canst thus ex-
press

A flowery tale more sweetly than
our rime.

What leaf-fringed legend haunts
about thy shape 5

Of deities or mortals, or of both,

In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?

What men or gods are these? What
maidens loath?

What mad pursuit? What struggle
to escape?

What pipes and timbrels? What
wild ecstasy? 10

Heard melodies are sweet, but those
unheard

Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes,
play on;

Not to the sensual ear, but, more en-
deared,

Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou
canst not leave 15

Thy song, nor ever can those trees
be bare;

Bold Lover, never, never canst
thou kiss,

Though winning near the goal—yet,
do not grieve;

She cannot fade, though thou
hast not thy bliss,

For ever will thou love, and she be
fair! 20

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that can-
not shed

Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring
adieu;

And, happy melodist, unwearied,

For ever piping songs for ever new;

More happy love! more happy, happy
love! 25

For ever warm and still to be en-
joyed,

For ever panting and for ever
young;

All breathing human passion far
above,

That leaves a heart high-sorrowful
and cloyed,

A burning forehead, and a parch-
ing tongue. 30

Who are these coming to the sacri-
fice?

To what green altar, O mysterious
priest,

Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the
skies,

And all her silken flanks with gar-
lands dressed?

What little town by river or sea-
shore,

Or mountain-built with peaceful
citadel, 36

Is emptied of this folk, this pious
morn?

And, little town, thy streets for ever-
more

Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er
return. 40

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with
brede

Of marble men and maidens over-
wrought,

With forest branches and the trodden
weed;

Thou, silent form, dost tease us out
of thought

As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral! 45

When old age shall this generation
waste,

Thou shalt remain, in midst of
other woe

Than ours, a friend to man, to whom
thou say'st,

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,"—
that is all

Ye know on earth, and all ye
need to know. 50

WALT WHITMAN

Pioneers! O Pioneers!

COME my tan-faced children,
Follow well in order, get your weapons ready,
Have you your pistols? have you your sharp-edged axes?
Pioneers! O pioneers!

For we cannot tarry here,
We must march my darlings, we must bear the brunt of danger,
We the youthful sinewy races, all the rest on us depend,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

O you youths, Western youths,
So impatient, full of action, full of manly pride and friendship,
Plain I see you Western youths, see you trampling with the foremost,
Pioneers! O pioneers! 10

Have the elder races halted?
Do they droop and end their lesson, wearied over there beyond the seas?
We take up the task eternal, and the burden and the lesson, 15
Pioneers! O pioneers! .

All the past we leave behind,
We debouch upon a newer mightier world, varied world,
Fresh and strong the world we seize, world of labor and the march,
Pioneers! O pioneers! 20

We detachments steady throwing,
Down the edges, through the passes, up the mountains steep,
Conquering, holding, daring, venturing as we go the unknown ways,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

We primeval forests felling, 25
We the rivers stemming, vexing we and piercing deep the mines within,
We the surface broad surveying, we the virgin soil upheaving,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Colorado men are we,
From the peaks gigantic, from the great sierras and the high plateaus, 30
From the mine and from the gully, from the hunting trail we come,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

From Nebraska, from Arkansas,
Central inland race are we, from Missouri, with the continental blood inter-
vein'd,
All the hands of comrades clasping, all the Southern, all the Northern, 35
Pioneers! O pioneers!

O restless restless race!
O beloved race in all! O my breast aches with tender love for all!
O I mourn and yet exult, I am rapt with love for all,
Pioneers! O pioneers! 40

Raise the mighty mother mistress,
Waving high the delicate mistress, over all the starry mistress (bend your
heads all),
Raise the fang'd and warlike mistress, stern, impassive, weapon'd mistress,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

See my children, resolute children, 45
By those swarms upon our rear we must never yield or falter,
Ages back in ghostly millions frowning there behind us urging,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

On and on the compact ranks,
With accessions ever waiting, with the places of the dead quickly fill'd, 50
Through the battle, through defeat, moving yet and never stopping,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

O to die advancing on!
Are there some of us to droop and die? has the hour come?
Then upon the march we fittest die, soon and sure the gap is fill'd, 55
Pioneers! O pioneers!

All the pulses of the world,
Falling in they beat for us, with the Western movement beat,
Holding single or together, steady moving to the front, all for us,
Pioneers! O pioneers! 60

Life's involv'd and varied pageants,
All the forms and shows, all the workmen at their work,
All the seamen and the landsmen, all the masters with their slaves,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

All the hapless silent lovers, 65
All the prisoners in the prisons, all the righteous and the wicked,
All the joyous, all the sorrowing, all the living, all the dying,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

I too with my soul and body,
We, a curious trio, picking, wandering on our way, 70
Through these shores amid the shadows, with the apparitions pressing.
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Lo, the darting bowling orb!
Lo, the brother orbs around, all the clustering suns and planets,
All the dazzling days, all the mystic nights with dreams, 75
Pioneers! O pioneers!

There are of us, they are with us,
All for primal needed work, while the followers there in embryo wait behind,
We to-day's procession heading, we the route for travel clearing,
Pioneers! O pioneers! 80

O you daughters of the West!
O you young and elder daughters! O you mothers and you wives!
Never must you be divided, in our ranks you move united,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

Minstrels latent on the prairies! 85
 (Shrouded bards of other lands, you may rest, you have done your work,)
 Soon I hear you coming warbling, soon you rise and tramp amid us,
 Pioneers! O pioneers!

Not for delectations sweet,
 Not the cushion and the slipper, not the peaceful and the studious, 90
 Not the riches safe and palling, not for us the tame enjoyment,
 Pioneers! O pioneers!

Do the feasters gluttonous feast?
 Do the corpulent sleepers sleep? have they lock'd and bolted doors?
 Still be ours the diet hard, and the blanket on the ground, 95
 Pioneers! O pioneers!

Has the night descended?
 Was the road of late so toilsome? did we stop discouraged nodding on our
 way?
 Yet a passing hour I yield you in your tracks to pause oblivious,
 Pioneers! O pioneers! 100

Till with sound of trumpet,
 Far, far off the daybreak call—hark! how loud and clear I hear it wind,
 Swift! to the head of the army!—swift! spring to your places,
 Pioneers! O pioneers!

CARL SANDBURG

*Chicago*¹

Hog Butcher for the World,
 Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat,
 Player with Railroads and the Nation's
 Freight Handler;
 Stormy, husky, brawling,
 City of the Big Shoulders: 5

They tell me you are wicked and I believe them, for I have seen your painted
 women under the gas lamps luring the farm boys.
 And they tell me you are crooked and I answer: Yes, it is true I have seen the
 gunman kill and go free to kill again.
 And they tell me you are brutal and my reply is: On the faces of women and
 children I have seen the marks of wanton hunger.

¹ From *Chicago Poems*, copyright, 1916, Henry Holt and Company. By permission of the publishers.

And having answered so I turn once more to those who sneer at this my city,
and I give them back the sneer and say to them:

Come and show me another city with lifted head singing so proud to be alive
and coarse and strong and cunning. 10

Flinging magnetic curses amid the toil of piling job on job, here is a tall bold
slugger set vivid against the little soft cities;

Fierce as a dog with tongue lapping for action, cunning as a savage pitted
against the wilderness,

Bareheaded,

Shoveling,

Wrecking, 15

Planning,

Building, breaking, rebuilding,

Under the smoke, dust all over his mouth, laughing with white teeth,

Under the terrible burden of destiny laughing as a young man laughs,

Laughing even as an ignorant fighter laughs who has never lost a battle, 20

Bragging and laughing that under his wrist is the pulse, and under his ribs
the heart of the people,

Laughing!

Laughing the stormy, husky, brawling laughter of Youth, half-naked, sweat-
ing, proud to be Hog Butcher, Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat, Player with
Railroads and Freight Handler to the Nation.

SONGS

ROBERT BURNS

Willie Brewed a Peck O' Maut

O WILLIE brewed a peck o'
maut,
And Rob and Allan cam to
see;

Three blither hearts, that lee-lang
night,
Ye wad na found in Christendie.

Chorus

We are na fou, we're no that fou, 5
But just a drappie in our e'e;
The cock may crawl, the day may
daw,
And aye we'll taste the barley bree.

Here are we met, three merry boys,
Three merry boys, I trow, are
we; 10

And mony a night we've merry
been,
And mony mae we hope to be!

It is the moon, I ken her horn,
That's blinkin' in the lift sae hie;
She shines sae bright to wyle us
hame, 15

But, by my sooth! she'll wait a wee.

Wha first shall rise to gang awa,
A cuckold, coward loun is he!
Wha first beside his chair shall fa',
He is the king among us three! 20

Sweet Afton

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy
green braes,
Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in
thy praise;
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring
stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not
her dream.

Thou stock-dove whose echo resounds
through the glen, ⁵
Ye wild whistling blackbirds in yon
thorny den,
Thou green-crested lapwing, thy
screaming forbear,
I charge you disturb not my slumber-
ing fair.

How lofty, sweet Afton, thy neigh-
boring hills,
Far marked with the courses of clear
winding rills; ¹⁰
There daily I wander as noon rises
high,
My flocks and my Mary's sweet cot in
my eye.

How pleasant thy banks and green
valleys below,
Where wild in the woodlands the
primroses blow;
There oft as mild ev'ning weeps over
the lea, ¹⁵
The sweet-scented birk shades my
Mary and me.

Thy crystal stream, Afton, how lovely
it glides,
And winds by the cot where my Mary
resides;
How wanton thy waters her snowy
feet lave,
As gathering sweet flow'rets she stems
thy clear wave. ²⁰

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy
green braes,
Flow gently, sweet river, the theme of
my lays;
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring
stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not
her dream.

Auld Lang Syne

Should auld acquaintance be for-
got,
And never brought to min'?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And auld lang syne?

Chorus

For auld lang syne, my dear, ⁵
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.

And surely ye'll be your pint-stowp,
And surely I'll be mine; ¹⁰
And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne.

We twa hae run about the braes,
And pu'd the gowans fine;
But we've wandered mony a weary
foot ¹⁵
Sin' auld lang syne.

We twa hae paidled i' the burn,
From morning sun till dine;
But seas between us braid hae roared
Sin' auld lang syne. ²⁰

And there's a hand, my trusty fiere;
And gie's a hand o' thine;
And we'll tak a right guid-willie
waught,
For auld lang syne.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

Break, Break, Break

B^{REAK}, break, break,
 On thy cold gray stones, O
 Sea!
 And I would that my tongue could
 utter
 The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy, 5
 That he shouts with his sister at
 play!
 O well for the sailor lad,
 That he sings in his boat on the
 bay!

And the stately ships go on
 To their haven under the hill; 10
 But O for the touch of a vanished
 hand,
 And the sound of a voice that is
 still!

Break, break, break,
 At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
 But the tender grace of a day that is
 dead 15
 Will never come back to me.

The Splendor Falls

The splendor falls on castle walls
 And snowy summits old in
 story;
 The long light shakes across the
 lakes,
 And the wild cataract leaps in
 glory.
 Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes
 flying, 5
 Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying,
 dying, dying.

O hark, O hear! how thin and
 clear,
 And thinner, clearer, farther go-
 ing!
 O sweet and far from cliff and scar
 The horns of Elfland faintly
 blowing! 10
 Blow, let us hear the purple glens re-
 plying,
 Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying,
 dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
 They faint on hill or field or
 river
 Our echoes roll from soul to soul, 15
 And grow for ever and for ever.
 Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes
 flying,
 And answer, echoes, answer, dying,
 dying, dying.

ROBERT BROWNING

Marching Along

K^{ENTISH} Sir Byng stood for his
 King,
 Bidding the crop-headed Par-
 lament swing:
 And, pressing a troop unable to
 stoop
 And see the rogues flourish and hon-
 est folk droop,
 Marched them along, fifty-score
 strong, 5
 Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this
 song.

God for King Charles! Pym and
 such carles
 To the Devil that prompts 'em their
 treasonous parles!

Cavaliers, up! Lips from the cup,
 Hands from the pasty, nor bite take
 nor sup 10
 Till you're—

CHO.—Marching along, fifty-score
 strong,
 Great-hearted gentlemen,
 singing this song.

Hampden to hell, and his obsequies'
 knell.

Serve Hazelrig, Fiennes, and young
 Harry as well!

England, good cheer! Rupert is
 near!

Kentish and loyalists, keep we not
 here, 16

CHO.—Marching along, fifty-score
 strong,
 Great-hearted gentlemen,
 singing this song?

Then, God for King Charles! Pym
 and his snarls
 To the Devil that pricks on such
 pestilent carles! 20
 Hold by the right, you double your
 might;
 So, onward to Nottingham, fresh for
 the fight,

CHO.—Marching along, fifty-score
 strong,
 Great-hearted gentlemen,
 singing this song!

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

When I Am Dead, My Dearest

WHEN I am dead, my dearest,
 Sing no sad songs for me;
 Plant thou no roses at my
 head,

Nor shady cypress tree:
 Be the green grass above me 5
 With showers and dewdrops wet:
 And if thou wilt, remember,
 And if thou wilt, forget.

I shall not see the shadows,
 I shall not see the rain; 10
 I shall not hear the nightingale
 Sing on as if in pain:
 And dreaming through the twilight
 That doth not rise nor set,
 Haply I may remember, 15
 And haply may forget.

F. W. BOURDILLON

The Night Has A Thousand Eyes

THE night has a thousand eyes,
 And the day but one;
 Yet the light of the bright
 world dies
 With the dying sun.

The mind has a thousand eyes, 5
 And the heart but one;
 Yet the light of a whole life dies
 When love is done.

EDGAR ALLAN POE

Eulalie—A Song

I DWELT alone
 In a world of moan,
 And my soul was a stagnant tide,
 Till the fair and gentle Eulalie became my blushing bride—
 Till the yellow-haired young Eulalie became my smiling bride. 5

Ah, less—less bright
 The stars of the night
 Than the eyes of the radiant girl!
 And never a flake
 That the vapor can make 10
 With the moon-tints of purple and pearl,
 Can vie with the modest Eulalie's most unregarded curl—
 Can compare with the bright-eyed Eulalie's most humble and careless curl.

No Doubt—now Pain
 Come never again, 15
 For her soul gives me sigh for sigh,
 And all day long
 Shines, bright and strong,
 Astarte within the sky,
 While ever to her dear Eulalie upturns her matron eye— 20
 While ever to her young Eulalie upturns her violet eye.

LIGHTER LYRICS

SAMUEL T. COLERIDGE

The Exchange

WE pledged our hearts, my love
 and I,—
 I in my arms the maiden
 clasping:
 I could not tell the reason why,
 But oh! I trembled like an aspen.
 Her father's love she bade me gain; 5
 I went, and shook like any reed!

I strove to act the man in vain!
 We had exchanged our hearts in-
 deed.

THOMAS MOORE

The Time I've Lost in Wooing

THE time I've lost in wooing,
 In watching and pursuing
 The light that lies
 In woman's eyes,
 Has been my heart's undoing. 5

Tho' wisdom oft has sought me,
 I scorn'd the lore she brought me,
 My only books
 Were woman's looks,
 And folly's all they taught me. 10

Her smile when Beauty granted,
 I hung with gaze enchanted,
 Like him the sprite
 Whom maids by night
 Oft meet in glen that's haunted. 15

Like him, too, Beauty won me;
 But when the spell was on me,
 If once their ray
 Was turn'd away,
 O! winds could not outrun me. 20

And are those follies going?
 And is my proud heart growing
 Too cold or wise
 For brilliant eyes
 Again to set it glowing? 25
 No—vain, alas! th'endeavor
 From bonds so sweet to sever;—
 Poor Wisdom's chance
 Against a glance
 Is now as weak as ever. 30

LEIGH HUNT

Rondeau

JENNY kissed me when we met,
 Jumping from the chair she sat
 in;
 Time, you thief, who love to get
 Sweets into your list, put that in:
 Say I'm weary, say I'm sad, 5
 Say that health and wealth have
 missed me,
 Say I'm growing old, but add,
 Jenny kissed me!

NATHANIEL PARKER WILLIS

Love in a Cottage

THEY may talk of love in a cot-
 tage,
 And bowers of trellised vine,—
 Of nature bewitchingly simple,
 And milkmaids half divine;
 They may talk of the pleasure of
 sleeping 5
 In the shade of a spreading tree,
 And a walk in the fields at morning
 By the side of a footstep free.

But give me a sly flirtation
 By the light of a chandelier, 10
 With music to play in the pauses,
 And nobody very near:
 Or a seat on a silken sofa,
 With a glass of pure old wine,
 And mamma too blind to discover 15
 The small white hand in mine.

Your love in a cottage is hungry,
 Your vine is a nest for flies,
 Your milkmaid shocks the Graces,
 And simplicity talks of pies. 20
 You lie down to your shady slum-
 ber
 And wake with a bug in your ear,
 And your damsel that walks in the
 morning
 Is shod like a mountaineer.

True love is at home on a carpet, 25
 And mightily likes his ease,
 And true love has an eye for a din-
 ner,
 And starves beneath shady trees.
 His wing is the fan of a lady,
 His foot's an invisible thing, 30
 And his arrow is tipped with a jewel
 And shot from a silver string.

THOMAS HOOD, JR.

A Letter of Advice

WHEN you love—as all men
will—
Sing the theme of your
devotion,

Sue—and vow—and worship still—
Overflow with deep emotion,
Bow to Cupid's sweet decrees, 5
Lightly wear the happy fetter,
Bend the knee and plead! But please,
Do not write your love a letter!

Ah! most tempting it may be: 9
Ink flows free—and pens will write,
And your passion fain you'd see
Plainly mapped in black and white.
Yet refrain from shedding ink,
If you can:—'tis wiser—better.
Ere you pen a sentence, think! 15
Do not write your love a letter.

Hearts may cool, and views may
change—

Other scenes may seem inviting,
But a heart can't safely range
If committed 'tis to writing. 20
What you've written is a writ,
Holds you closely as a debtor.
Will she spare you? Not a bit!
Do not write your love a letter!

Think of Breach of Promise cause, 25
Think of barristers provoking,
Leading you to slips and flaws,
Turning all your love to joking.
If you've written aught, they'll be
Safe to find it as a setter— 30
Then you'll wish you'd hearkened
me—

Do not write your love a letter!

Oh, those letters read in Court!
How the tender things seem stupid!

How deep feeling seems but sport! 35
How young Momus trips up
Cupid!

Take my warning then—or soon,
O'er your folly you'll be fatter,
Saying, "Why, poor, foolish spoon,
Did I write my love a letter?" 40

FREDERICK
LOCKER-LAMPSON*A Terrible Infant*

I RECOLLECT a nurse call'd Ann
Who carried me about the grass,
And one fine day a fine young
man
Came up and kiss'd the pretty lass.
She did not make the least objection!
Thinks I, "Aha! 6
When I can talk I'll tell Mamma"—
And that's my earliest recollection.

W. E. HENLEY

Ballade Made in the Hot Weather

MOUNTAINS that frisk and
sprinkle
The moss they overspill;
Grass that the breezes crinkle;
The wheel beside the mill,
With its wet, weedy frill; 5
Wind-shadows in the wheat;
A water-cart in the street;
The fringe of foam that girds
An islet's ferneries;
A green sky's minor thirds— 10
To live, I think of these!

Of ice and glass the tinkle,
Pellucid, silver-shrill;
Peaches without a wrinkle;

Cherries and snow, at will 15
 From china bowls that fill
 The senses with a sweet
 Incuriousness of heat;
 A melon's dripping sherds;
 Cream-clotted strawberries; 20
 Dusk dairies set with curds—
 To live, I think of these!

Vale-lily and periwinkle;
 Wet stone-crop on the sill;
 The look of leaves a-twinkle 25
 With windlets clear and still;
 The feel of a forest rill
 That wimples fresh and fleet
 About one's naked feet;
 The muzzles of drinking herds; 30
 Lush flags and bulrushes;
 The chirp of rain-bound birds—
 To live, I think of these!

Envoy

Dark aisles, new packs of cards,
 Mermaidens' tails, cool swards, 35
 Dawn dewes and starlit seas,
 White marbles, whiter words—
 To live, I think of these!

AUSTIN DOBSON

The Ballade of Prose and Rhyme

WHEN the ways are heavy with
 mire and rut,
 In November fogs, in
 December snows,
 When the North Wind howls, and
 the doors are shut,—
 There is place and enough for the
 pains of prose;
 But whenever a scent from the
 whitethorn blows, 5
 And the jasmine-stars at the casement
 climb,

And a Rosalind-face at the lattice
 shows,
 Then hey!—for the ripple of laugh-
 ing rhyme!

When the brain gets dry as an empty
 nut,
 When the reason stands on its
 squarest toes, 10
 When the mind (like a beard) has a
 "formal cut,"—
 There is place and enough for the
 pains of prose;
 But whenever the May-blood stirs
 and glows,
 And the young year draws to the
 "golden prime,"
 And Sir Romeo sticks in his ear a
 rose, 15
 Then hey!—for the ripple of laughing
 rhyme!

In a theme where the thoughts have
 a pedant-strut,
 In a changing quarrel of "Ayes"
 and "Noes,"
 In a starched procession of "If" and
 "But,"—
 There is place and enough for the
 pains of prose; 20
 But wherever a soft glance softer
 grows,
 And the light hours dance to the
 trysting-time,
 And the secret is told "that no one
 knows,"
 Then hey!—for the ripple of laugh-
 ing rhyme!

Envoy

In the work-a-day world, for its needs
 and woes, 25
 There is place and enough for the
 pains of prose;

But whenever the May-bells clash
and chime,
Then hey!—for the ripple of laughing
rhyme!

Urceus Exit

I intended an Ode,
And it turned to a Sonnet.
It began à la mode,
I intended an Ode;
But Rose crossed the road
In her latest new bonnet;
I intended an Ode;
And it turned to a Sonnet.

ARTHUR KIDD

*Their Mother Tongue*¹

According to Professor Greet of New York,
King Alfred said "Oh, yeah" since he used the
Saxon word "Gea" as an affirmative and pro-
nounced the "g" as "y"

A PICKER-UP of crumbs at Learn-
ing's table,
I love to loiter at Gamaliel's
feet
And feast on such a dainty (dropped
by cable)
Fresh from the menu of Professor
Greet.
Though otherwise the word was spelt
and written,
'Tis comforting at any rate to know
King Alfred spilled a mouthful too in
Britain
Ten centuries ago.

As acting-cook (incognito) it may be
Upon that fabled and historic day

¹ Reprinted by permission of the Proprietors
of 'PUNCH'.

He soothed the irate dame with
"O.K., Baby!"
Or e'er she chucked the ruined
cake away.
"Big boy!" would burst from him
perchance *instantier*
Over some deed of prowess; while
mayhap
He dubbed the Danish foe, by way
of banter,
A "Hoodlum" * or a "Sap." †

If a stout henchman brought him in-
formation
Of Guthrum's bandits smitten thigh
and hip,
It may be the jejune ejaculation
"Hot dog!" fell slickly from the
royal lip.
Doubtless at Wedmore, when beneath
his banner
The courtiers knelt beside the
kingly chair,
He murmured in his most disarming
manner,
"Say, Bo, just put it there!"

We have no evidence to back the
thesis;
But, though some rival pundit may
elect
To tear the good Professor's views to
pieces,
I much prefer to think that he's
correct.
No longer I'll be guilty of the folly
Of looking on this lingo as ta-
boo,
Seeing that even in the Wood called
Holly
They talk King's English too.

* A disturber of the peace. † A stupid per-
son.

SATIRE

LORD BYRON

From Don Juan

MILTON's the prince of poets—
 so we say;
 A little heavy, but no less
 divine:

An independent being in his day—
 Learned, pious, temperate in love
 and wine;
 But his life falling into Johnson's
 way,

We're told this great high priest of
 all the Nine
 Was whipped at college—a harsh sire
 —odd spouse,
 For the first Mrs. Milton left his
 house.

All these are, *certainly*, entertaining facts,
 Like Shakespeare's stealing deer,
 Lord Bacon's bribes;
 Like Titus' youth, and Cæsar's earliest
 acts;

Like Burns (whom Doctor Currie
 well describes);
 Like Cromwell's pranks;—but al-
 though truth exacts

These amiable descriptions from the
 scribes,
 As most essential to their hero's story,
 They do not much contribute to his
 glory.

All are not moralists, like Southey,
 when

He prated to the world of "Pantis-
 ocracy";

Or Wordsworth unexcised, unhired,
 who then

Seasoned his peddler poems with
 democracy;

Or Coleridge, long before his flighty
 pen

Let to the Morning Post its aris-
 tocracy;

When he and Southey, following the
 same path,

Espoused two partners (milliners of
 Bath).

Such names at present cut a convict
 figure,

The very Botany Bay in moral
 geography;

Their loyal treason, renegado rigor,
 Are good manure for their more
 bare biography;

Wordsworth's last quarto, by the way,
 is bigger

Than any since the birthday of
 typography;

A drowsy, frowsy poem, called the
 "Excursion,"

Writ in a manner which is my aver-
 sion.

He there builds up a formidable dyke
 Between his own and others' intel-
 lect;

But Wordsworth's poem, and his fol-
 lowers, like

Joanna Southcote's Shiloh and her
 sect,

Are things which in this century don't
 strike

The public mind,—so few are the
 elect;

And the new births of both their stale
virginities
Have proved but dropsies, taken for
divinities. 40

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH

The Latest Decalogue

THOU shalt have one God only;
who
Would be at the expense of
two?

No graven images may be
Worshiped, except the currency:
Swear not at all; for, for thy curse 5
Thine enemy is none the worse:
At church on Sunday to attend
Will serve to keep the world thy
friend:

Honor thy parents. that is, all
From whom advancement may be-
fall; 10

Thou shalt not kill; but need'st not
strive

Officially to keep alive:
Do not adultery commit;
Advantage rarely comes of it:
Thou shalt not steal; an empty feat, 15
When it's so lucrative to cheat:

Bear not false witness; let the lie
Have time on its own wings to fly:
Thou shalt not covet, but tradition
Approves all forms of competition. 20

EDWIN ARLINGTON
ROBINSON*Miniver Cheevy*¹

MINIVER CHEEVY, child of scorn,
Grew lean while he assailed
the seasons;
He wept that he was ever born,
And he had reasons.

Miniver loved the days of old 5
When swords were bright and
steeds were prancing;
The vision of a warrior bold
Would set him dancing.

Miniver sighed for what was not,
And dreamed, and rested from his
labors; 10
He dreamed of Thebes and Camelot,
And Priam's neighbors.

Miniver mourned the ripe renown
That made so many a name so
fragrant;
He mourned Romance, now on the
town, 15
And Art, a vagrant.

Miniver loved the Medici,
Albert he had never seen one;
He would have sinned incessantly
Could he have been one. 20

Miniver cursed the commonplace
And eyed a khaki suit with loath-
ing;
He missed the mediæval grace
Of iron clothing.

Miniver scorned the gold he sought,
But sore annoyed was he without
it; 26
Miniver thought, and thought, and
thought,
And thought about it.

Miniver Cheevy, born too late,
Scratched his head and kept on
thinking; 30
Miniver coughed, and called it fate,
And kept on drinking.

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mission of the publishers.

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

*Base Details*¹

IF I were fierce and bald and short
of breath,
I'd live with scarlet Majors at the
Base,
And speed glum heroes up the line to
death.

You'd see me with my puffy petu-
lant face,
Guzzling and gulping in the best
hotel,

Reading the Roll of Honor. "Poor
young chap,"

I'd say—"I used to know his father
well.

Yes, we've lost heavily in this last
scrap."

And when the war is done and youth
stone dead,

I'd toddle safely home and die—in
bed.

While the True Church can never
fail
For it is based upon a rock.

The hippo's feeble steps may err
In compassing material ends,
While the True Church need never
stir
To gather in its dividends.

The 'potamus can never reach
The mango on the mango-tree;
But fruits of pomegranate and peach
Refresh the Church from over sea.

At mating time the hippo's voice
Betrays inflexions hoarse and odd,
But every week we hear rejoice
The Church, at being one with
God.

The hippopotamus's day
Is passed in sleep; at night he hunts;
God works in a mysterious way—
The Church can sleep and feed at
once.

T. S. ELIOT

*The Hippopotamus*²

*And when this epistle is read among you,
cause that it be read also in the church of the
Laodiceans.*

THE broad-backed hippopotamus
Rests on his belly in the mud;
Although he seems so firm to
us
He is merely flesh and blood.

Flesh-and-blood is weak and frail,
Susceptible to nervous shock;

I saw the 'potamus take wing
Ascending from the damp savannas,
And quiring angels round him sing
The praise of God, in loud hosannas.

Blood of the Lamb shall wash him
clean
And him shall heavenly arms enfold,
Among the saints he shall be seen
Performing on a harp of gold.

He shall be washed as white as snow,
By all the martyr'd virgins kist,
While the True Church remains be-
low
Wrapt in the old miasmal mist.

¹ From *Counter-Attack*. By permission of the author.

² From *Poems 1909-1925* Copyright by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc. By permission of the publishers.

E. E. CUMMINGS

*Next to of Course God*¹

"next to of course god america i
 love you land of the pilgrims' and so
 forth oh
 say can you see by the dawn's early
 my
 country 'tis of centuries come and
 go
 and are no more what of it we should
 worry
 in every language even deafanddumb

¹ From "is 5," published by Boni & Liveright.
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thy sons acclaim your glorious name
 by gorry
 by jingo by gee by gosh by gum
 why talk of beauty what could be
 more beauti-
 ful than these heroic happy dead
 who rushed like lions to the roaring
 slaughter
 they did not stop to think they died
 instead
 then shall the voices of liberty be
 mute?"

He spoke. And drank rapidly a glass
 of water.

THE NOVEL

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THE RETURN OF THE NATIVE

by Thomas Hardy

BOOK ONE: THE THREE WOMEN

I. A FACE ON WHICH TIME MAKES BUT LITTLE IMPRESSION

A SATURDAY afternoon in November was approaching the time of twilight, and the vast tract of unenclosed wild known as Egdon Heath embrowned itself moment by moment. Overhead the hollow stretch of whitish cloud shutting out the sky was as a tent which had the whole heath for its floor.

The heaven being spread with this pallid screen and the earth with the darkest vegetation, their meeting-line at the horizon was clearly marked. In such contrast the heath wore the appearance of an instalment of night which had taken up its place before its astronomical hour was come: darkness had to a great extent arrived hereon, while day stood distinct in the sky. Looking upwards, a furze-cutter would have been inclined to continue work; looking down, he would have decided to finish his faggot and go home. The distant rims of the world and of the firmament seemed to be a division in time no less than a division in matter. The face of the heath by its mere complexion added half an hour to evening; it could in like manner retard the dawn, sadden noon, anticipate the frowning of storms scarcely generated, and intensify the opacity of a moonless midnight to a cause of shaking and dread.

In fact, precisely at this transitional point of its nightly roll into darkness the great and particular glory of the Egdon waste began, and nobody could be said to understand the heath who had not been there at such a time. It could best be felt when it could not clearly be seen, its complete effect and explanation lying in this and the succeeding hours before the next dawn: then, and only then, did it tell its true tale. The spot was, indeed, a near relation of night, and when night showed itself an apparent tendency to gravitate together could be perceived in its shades and the scene. The sombre stretch of rounds and hollows seemed to rise and meet the evening gloom in pure sympathy, the heath exhaling darkness as rapidly as the heavens precipitated it. And so the obscurity in the air and the obscurity in the land closed together in a black fraternization towards which each advanced half-way.

The place became full of a watchful intentness now; for when other things sank brooding to sleep the heath appeared slowly to awake and listen. Every night its Titanic form seemed to await something; but it had waited thus, unmoved, during so many centuries, through the crises of so many things, that it could only be imagined to await one last crisis—the final overthrow.

It was a spot which returned upon the memory of those who loved it with an aspect of peculiar and kindly congruity. Smiling campaigns of flowers and fruit hardly do this, for they are permanently harmonious only with an existence of better reputation as to its issues than the present. Twilight combined with the scenery of Egdon Heath to evolve a thing majestic without severity, impressive without showiness, emphatic in its admonitions, grand in its simplicity. The qualifications which frequently invest the façade of a prison with far more dignity than is found in the façade of a palace double its size lent to this heath a sublimity in which spots renowned for beauty of the accepted kind are utterly wanting. Fair prospects wed happily with fair times; but alas, if times be not fair! Men have oftener suffered from the mockery of a place too smiling for their reason than from the oppression of surroundings oversadly tinged. Haggard Egdon appealed to a subtler and scarcer instinct, to a more recently learnt emotion, than that which responds to the sort of beauty called charming and fair.

Indeed, it is a question if the exclusive reign of this orthodox beauty is not approaching its last quarter. The new Vale of Tempe may be a gaunt waste in Thule: human souls may find themselves in closer and closer harmony with external things wearing a sombreness distasteful to our race when it was young. The time seems near, if it has not actually arrived, when the chastened sublimity of a moor, a sea, or a mountain will be all of nature that is absolutely in keeping with the moods of the more thinking among mankind. And ultimately, to the commonest tourist, spots like Iceland may become what the vineyards and myrtle-gardens of South Europe are to him now; and Heidelberg and Baden be passed unheeded as he hastens from the Alps to the sand-dunes of Scheveningen.

The most thorough-going ascetic could feel that he had a natural right to wander on Egdon: he was keeping within the line of legitimate indulgence when he laid himself open to influences such as these. Colours and beauties so far subdued were, at least, the birthright of all. Only in summer days of highest feather did its mood touch the level of gaiety. Intensity was more usually reached by way of the solemn than by way of the brilliant, and such a sort of intensity was often arrived at during winter darkness, tempests, and mists. Then Egdon was aroused to reciprocity; for the storm was its lover, and the wind its friend. Then it became the home of strange phantoms; and it was found to be the hitherto unrecognized original of those wild regions of obscurity which are vaguely felt to be compassing us about in midnight dreams of flight and disaster, and are never thought of after the dream till revived by scenes like this.

It was at present a place perfectly accordant with man's nature—neither

ghastly, hateful, nor ugly: neither commonplace, unmeaning, nor tame; but, like man, slighted and enduring; and withal singularly colossal and mysterious in its swarthy monotony. As with some persons who have long lived apart, solitude seemed to look out of its countenance. It had a lonely face, suggesting tragical possibilities.

This obscure, obsolete, superseded country figures in Domesday. Its condition is recorded therein as that of heathy, furzy, briary wilderness—'Bruaria.' Then follows the length and breadth in leagues; and, though some uncertainty exists as to the exact extent of this ancient lineal measure, it appears from the figures that the area of Egdon down to the present day has but little diminished. 'Turbaria Bruaria'—the right of cutting heath-turf—occurs in characters relating to the district. 'Overgrown with heth and mosse,' says Leland of the same dark sweep of country.

Here at least were intelligible facts regarding landscape—far-reaching proofs productive of genuine satisfaction. The untameable, Ishmaelitish thing that Egdon now was it always had been. Civilization was its enemy; and ever since the beginning of vegetation its soil had worn the same antique brown dress, the natural and invariable garment of the particular formation. In its venerable one coat lay a certain vein of satire on human vanity in clothes. A person on a heath in raiment of modern cut and colours has more or less an anomalous look. We seem to want the oldest and simplest human clothing where the clothing of the earth is so primitive.

To recline on a stump of thorn in the central valley of Egdon, between afternoon and night, as now, where the eye could reach nothing of the world outside the summits and shoulders of heathland which filled the whole circumference of its glance, and to know that everything around and underneath had been from prehistoric times as unaltered as the stars overhead, gave ballast to the mind adrift on change, and harassed by the irrepressible New. The great inviolate place had an ancient permanence which the sea cannot claim. Who can say of a particular sea that it is old? Distilled by the sun, kneaded by the moon, it is renewed in a year, in a day, or in an hour. The sea changed, the fields changed, the rivers, the villages, and the people changed, yet Egdon remained. Those surfaces were neither so steep as to be destructible by weather, nor so flat as to be the victims of floods and deposits. With the exception of an aged highway, and a still more aged barrow presently to be referred to—themselves almost crystallized to natural products by long continuance—even the trifling irregularities were not caused by pickaxe, plough, or spade, but remained as the very finger-touches of the last geological change.

The above-mentioned highway traversed the lower levels of the heath, from one horizon to another. In many portions of its course it overlaid an old vicinal way, which branched from the great Western road of the Romans, the Via Iceniana, or Ikenild Street, hard by. On the evening under consideration it would have been noticed that, though the gloom had increased sufficiently to confuse the minor features of the heath, the white surface of the road remained almost as clear as ever.

II. HUMANITY APPEARS UPON THE SCENE, HAND IN HAND WITH TROUBLE

A LONG the road walked an old man. He was white-headed as a mountain, bowed in the shoulders, and faded in general aspect. He wore a glazed hat, an ancient boat-cloak, and shoes; his brass buttons bearing an anchor upon their face. In his hand was a silver-headed walking-stick, which he used as a veritable third leg, perseveringly dotting the ground with its point at every few inches' interval. One would have said that he had been, in his day, a naval officer of some sort or other.

Before him stretched the long, laborious road, dry, empty, and white. It was quite open to the heath on each side, and bisected that vast dark surface like the parting-line on a head of black hair, diminishing and bending away on the furthest horizon.

The old man frequently stretched his eyes ahead to gaze over the tract that he had yet to traverse. At length he discerned, a long distance in front of him, a moving spot, which appeared to be a vehicle, and it proved to be going the same way as that in which he himself was journeying. It was the single atom of life that the scene contained, and it only served to render the general loneliness more evident. Its rate of advance was slow, and the old man gained upon it sensibly.

When he drew nearer he perceived it to be a spring van, ordinary in shape, but singular in colour, this being a lurid red. The driver walked beside it; and, like his van, he was completely red. One dye of that tincture covered his clothes, the cap upon his head, his boots, his face, and his hands. He was not temporarily overlaid with the colour: it permeated him.

The old man knew the meaning of this. The traveller with the cart was a reddleman—a person whose vocation it was to supply farmers with redding for their sheep. He was one of a class rapidly becoming extinct in Wessex, filling at present in the rural world the place which, during the last century, the dodo occupied in the world of animals. He is a curious, interesting, and nearly perished link between obsolete forms of life and those which generally prevail.

The decayed officer, by degrees, came up alongside his fellow wayfarer, and wished him good evening. The reddleman turned his head, and replied in sad and occupied tones. He was young, and his face, if not exactly handsome, approached so near to handsome that nobody would have contradicted an assertion that it really was so in its natural colour. His eye, which glared so strangely through his stain, was in itself attractive—keen as that of a bird of prey, and blue as autumn mist. He had neither whisker nor moustache, which allowed the soft curves of the lower part of his face to be apparent. His lips were thin, and though, as it seemed, compressed by thought, there was

a pleasant twitch at their corners now and then. He was clothed throughout in a tight-fitting suit of corduroy, excellent in quality, not much worn, and well-chosen for its purpose; but deprived of its original colour by his trade. It showed to advantage the good shape of his figure. A certain well-to-do air about the man suggested that he was not poor for his degree. The natural query of an observer would have been, Why should such a promising being as this have hidden his prepossessing exterior by adopting that singular occupation?

After replying to the old man's greeting he showed no inclination to continue in talk, although they still walked side by side, for the elder traveller seemed to desire company. There were no sounds but that of the booming wind upon the stretch of tawny herbage around them, the crackling wheels, the tread of the men, and the footsteps of the two shaggy ponies which drew the van. They were small, hardy animals, of a breed between Galloway and Exmoor, and were known as 'heath-croppers' here.

Now, as they thus pursued their way, the reddleman occasionally left his companion's side, and, stepping behind the van, looked into its interior through a small window. The look was always anxious. He would then return to the old man, who made another remark about the state of the country and so on, to which the reddleman again abstractedly replied, and then again they would lapse into silence. The silence conveyed to neither any sense of awkwardness; in these lonely places wayfarers, after a first greeting, frequently plod on for miles without speech; contiguity amounts to a tacit conversation where, otherwise than in cities, such contiguity can be put an end to on the merest inclination, and where not to put an end to it is intercourse in itself.

Possibly these two might not have spoken again till their parting, had it not been for the reddleman's visits to his van. When he returned from his fifth time of looking in the old man said, 'You have something inside there besides your load?'

'Yes.'

'Somebody who wants looking after?'

'Yes.'

Not long after this a faint cry sounded from the interior. The reddleman hastened to the back, looked in, and came away again.

'You have a child there, my man?'

'No, sir, I have a woman.'

'The deuce you have! Why did she cry out?'

'Oh, she has fallen asleep, and not being used to travelling, she's uneasy, and keeps dreaming.'

'A young woman?'

'Yes, a young woman.'

'That would have interested me forty years ago. Perhaps she's your wife?'

'My wife!' said the other bitterly. 'She's above mating with such as I. But there's no reason why I should tell you about that.'

'That's true. And there's no reason why you should not. What harm can I do to you or to her?'

The reddleman looked in the old man's face. 'Well, sir,' he said at last, 'I knew her before to-day, though perhaps it would have been better if I had not. But she's nothing to me, and I am nothing to her; and she wouldn't have been in my van if any better carriage had been there to take her.'

'Where, may I ask?'

'At Anglebury.'

'I know the town well. What was she doing there?'

'Oh, not much—to gossip about. However, she's tired to death now, and not at all well, and that's what makes her so restless. She dropped off into a nap about an hour ago, and 'twill do her good.'

'A nice-looking girl, no doubt?'

'You would say so.'

The other traveller turned his eyes with interest towards the van window, and, without withdrawing them, said, 'I presume I might look in upon her?'

'No,' said the reddleman abruptly. 'It is getting too dark for you to see much of her; and, more than that, I have no right to allow you. Thank God she sleeps so well: I hope she won't wake till she's home.'

'Who is she? One of the neighbourhood?'

'Tis no matter who, excuse me.'

'It is not that girl of Blooms-End, who has been talked about more or less lately? If so, I know her; and I can guess what has happened.'

'Tis no matter. . . . Now, sir, I am sorry to say that we shall soon have to part company. My ponies are tired, and I have further to go, and I am going to rest them under this bank for an hour.'

The elder traveller nodded his head indifferently, and the reddleman turned his horses and van in upon the turf, saying, 'Good night.' The old man replied, and proceeded on his way as before.

The reddleman watched his form as it diminished to a speck on the road and became absorbed in the thickening films of night. He then took some hay from a truss which was slung up under the van, and, throwing a portion of it in front of the horses, made a pad of the rest, which he laid on the ground beside his vehicle. Upon this he sat down, leaning his back against the wheel. From the interior a low soft breathing came to his ear. It appeared to satisfy him, and he musingly surveyed the scene, as if considering the next step that he should take.

To do things musingly, and by small degrees, seemed indeed, to be a duty in the Egdon valleys at this transitional hour, for there was that in the condition of the heath itself which resembled protracted and halting dubiousness. It was the quality of the repose appertaining to the scene. This was not the repose of actual stagnation, but the apparent repose of incredible slowness. A condition of healthy life so nearly resembling the torpor of death is a noticeable thing of its sort; to exhibit the inertness of the desert, and at the same time to be exercising powers akin to those of the meadow, and even of the

forest, awakened in those who thought of it the attentiveness usually engendered by understatement and reserve.

The scene before the reddleman's eyes was a gradual series of ascents from the level of the road backward into the heart of the heath. It embraced hillocks, pits, ridges, acclivities, one behind the other, till all was finished by a high hill cutting against the still light sky. The traveller's eye hovered about these things for a time, and finally settled upon one noteworthy object up there. It was a barrow. This bossy projection of earth above its natural level occupied the loftiest ground of the loneliest height that the heath contained. Although from the vale it appeared but as a wart on an Atlantean brow, its actual bulk was great. It formed the pole and axis of this heathery world.

As the resting man looked at the barrow he became aware that its summit, hitherto the highest object in the whole prospect round, was surmounted by something higher. It rose from the semi-globular mound like a spike from a helmet. The first instinct of an imaginative stranger might have been to suppose it the person of one of the Celts who built the barrow, so far had all of modern date withdrawn from the scene. It seemed a sort of last man among them, musing for a moment before dropping into eternal night with the rest of his race.

There the form stood, motionless as the hill beneath. Above the plain rose the hill, above the hill rose the barrow, and above the barrow rose the figure. Above the figure was nothing that could be mapped elsewhere than on a celestial globe.

Such a perfect, delicate, and necessary finish did the figure give to the dark pile of hills that it seemed to be the only obvious justification of their outline. Without it, there was the dome without the lantern; with it the architectural demands of the mass were satisfied. The scene was strangely homogeneous. The vale, the upland, the barrow, and the figure above it amounted only to unity. Looking at this or that member of the group was not observing a complete thing, but a fraction of a thing.

The form was so much like an organic part of the entire motionless structure that to see it move would have impressed the mind as a strange phenomenon. Immobility being the chief characteristic of that whole which the person formed portion of, the discontinuance of immobility in any quarter suggested confusion.

Yet that is what happened. The figure perceptibly gave up its fixity, shifted a step or two, and turned round. As if alarmed, it descended on the right side of the barrow, with the glide of a water-drop down a bud, and then vanished. The movement had been sufficient to show more clearly the characteristics of the figure, and that it was a woman's.

The reason of her sudden displacement now appeared. With her dropping out of sight on the right side, a newcomer, bearing a burden, protruded into the sky on the left side, ascended the tumulus, and deposited the burden on the top. A second followed, then a third, a fourth, a fifth, and ultimately the whole barrow was peopled with burdened figures.

The only intelligible meaning in this sky-backed pantomime of silhouettes was that the woman had no relation to the forms who had taken her place, was sedulously avoiding these, and had come thither for another object than theirs. The imagination of the observer clung by preference to that vanished, solitary figure, as to something more interesting, more important, more likely to have a history worth knowing than these new-comers, and unconsciously regarded them as intruders. But they remained, and established themselves; and the lonely person who hitherto had been queen of the solitude did not at present seem likely to return.

III. THE CUSTOM OF THE COUNTRY

HAD a looker-on been posted in the immediate vicinity of the barrow, he would have learned that these persons were boys and men of the neighbouring hamlets. Each, as he ascended the barrow, had been heavily laden with furze-faggots, carried upon the shoulder by means of a long stake sharpened at each end for impaling them easily—two in front and two behind. They came from a part of the heath a quarter of a mile to the rear, where furze almost exclusively prevailed as a product.

Every individual was so involved in furze by his method of carrying the faggots that he appeared like a bush on legs till he had thrown them down. The party had marched in trail, like a travelling flock of sheep; that is to say, the strongest first, the weak and young behind.

The loads were all laid together, and a pyramid of furze thirty feet in circumference now occupied the crown of the tumulus, which was known as Rainbarrow for many miles round. Some made themselves busy with matches, and in selecting the driest tufts of furze, others in loosening the bramble bonds which held the faggots together. Others, again, while this was in progress, lifted their eyes and swept the vast expanse of country commanded by their position, now lying nearly obliterated by shade. In the valleys of the heath nothing save its own wild face was visible at any time of day; but this spot commanded a horizon enclosing a tract of far extent, and in many cases lying beyond the heath country. None of its features could be seen now, but the whole made itself felt as a vague stretch of remoteness.

While the men and lads were building the pile, a change took place in the mass of shade which denoted the distant landscape. Red suns and tufts of fire one by one began to arise, flecking the whole country round. They were the bonfires of other parishes and hamlets that were engaged in the same sort of commemoration. Some were distant, and stood in a dense atmosphere, so that bundles of pale strawlike beams radiated around them in the shape of a fan. Some were large and near, glowing scarlet-red from the shade, like wounds in a black hide. Some were Mænades, with winy faces and blown hair. These tintured the silent bosom of the clouds above them and lit up their ephemeral

caves, which seemed thenceforth to become scalding caldrons. Perhaps as many as thirty bonfires could be counted within the whole bounds of the district; and as the hour may be told on a clockface when the figures themselves are invisible, so did the men recognize the locality of each fire by its angle and direction, though nothing of the scenery could be viewed.

The first tall flame from Rainbarrow sprang into the sky, attracting all eyes that had been fixed on the distant conflagrations back to their own attempt in the same kind. The cheerful blaze streaked the inner surface of the human circle—now increased by other stragglers, male and female—with its own gold livery, and even overlaid the dark turf around with a lively luminousness, which softened off into obscurity where the barrow rounded downwards out of sight. It showed the barrow to be the segment of a globe, as perfect as on the day when it was thrown up, even the little ditch remaining from which the earth was dug. Not a plough had ever disturbed a grain of that stubborn soil. In the heath's barrenness to the farmer lay its fertility to the historian. There had been no obliteration, because there had been no tending.

It was as if the bonfire-makers were standing in some radiant upper storey of the world, detached from and independent of the dark stretches below. The heath down there was now a vast abyss, and no longer a continuation of what they stood on; for their eyes, adapted to the blaze, could see nothing of the deeps beyond its influence. Occasionally, it is true, a more vigorous flare than usual from their faggots sent darting lights like aides-de-camp down the inclines to some distant bush, pool, or patch of white sand, kindling these to replies of the same colour, till all was lost in darkness again. Then the whole black phenomenon beneath represented Limbo as viewed from the brink by the sublime Florentine in his vision, and the muttered articulations of the wind in the hollows were as complaints and petitions from the 'souls of mighty worth' suspended therein.

It was as if these men and boys had suddenly dived into past ages, and fetched therefrom an hour and deed which had before been familiar with this spot. The ashes of the original British pyre which blazed from that summit lay fresh and undisturbed in the barrow beneath their tread. The flames from funeral piles long ago kindled there had shone down upon the low-lands as these were shining now. Festival fires to Thor and Woden had followed on the same ground and duly had their day. Indeed, it is pretty well known that such blazes as this the heathmen were now enjoying are rather the lineal descendants from jumbled Druidical rites and Saxon ceremonies than the invention of popular feeling about Gunpowder Plot.

Moreover to light a fire is the instinctive and resistant act of man when, at the winter ingress, the curfew is sounded throughout Nature. It indicates a spontaneous, Promethean rebelliousness against the fiat that this recurrent season shall bring foul times, cold darkness, misery and death. Black chaos comes, and the fettered gods of the earth say, Let there be light.

The brilliant lights and sooty shades which struggled upon the skin and

clothes of the persons standing round caused their lineaments and general contours to be drawn with Dureresque vigour and dash. Yet the permanent moral expression of each face it was impossible to discover, for as the nimble flames towered, nodded, and swooped through the surrounding air, the blots of shade and flakes of light upon the countenances of the group changed shape and position endlessly. All was unstable; quivering as leaves, evanescent as lightning. Shadowy eye-sockets, deep as those of a death's head, suddenly turned into pits of lustre; a lantern-jaw was cavernous, then it was shining; wrinkles were emphasized to ravines, or obliterated entirely by a changed ray. Nostrils were dark wells; sinews in old necks were gilt mouldings; things with no particular polish on them were glazed; bright objects, such as the tip of a furze-hook one of the men carried, were as glass; eyeballs glowed like little lanterns. Those whom Nature had depicted as merely quaint became grotesque, the grotesque became preternatural; for all was in extremity.

Hence it may be that the face of an old man, who had like others been called to the heights by the rising flames, was not really the mere nose and chin that it appeared to be, but an appreciable quantity of human countenance. He stood complacently sunning himself in the heat. With a speaker, or stake, he tossed the outlying scraps of fuel into the conflagration, looking at the midst of the pile, occasionally lifting his eyes to measure the height of the flame, or to follow the great sparks which rose with it and sailed away into darkness. The beaming sight, and the penetrating warmth, seemed to breed in him a cumulative cheerfulness, which soon amounted to delight. With his stick in his hand he began to jig a private minuet, a bunch of copper seals shining and swinging like a pendulum from under his waistcoat: he also began to sing, in the voice of a bee up a flue—

‘The king’ call’d down’ his no-bles all’,
By one’, by two’, by three’;
Earl Mar’-shal, I’ll’ go shrive’ the queen’,
And thou’ shalt wend’ with me’.

A boon’, a boon’, quoth Earl’ Mar-shal’,
And fell’ on his bend’-ded knee’,
That what’-so-e’er’ the queen’ shall say’,
No harm’ there-of’ may be’.

Want of breath prevented a continuance of the song; and the breakdown attracted the attention of a firm-standing man of middle age, who kept each corner of his crescent-shaped mouth rigorously drawn back into his cheek, as if to do away with any suspicion of mirthfulness which might erroneously have attached to him.

‘A fair stave, Grandfer Cattle; but I am afeard ’tis too much for the mouldy weasand of such a old man as you,’ he said to the wrinkled reveller. ‘Doesn’t wish th’ wast three sixes again, Grandfer, as you was when you first learnt to sing it?’

‘Hey!’ said Grandfer Cattle, stopping in his dance.

'Dostn't wish was young again, I say? There's a hole in thy poor bellows nowadays seemingly.'

'But there's good art in me. If I couldn't make a little wind go a long ways I should seem no younger than the most aged man, should I, Timothy?'

'And how about the new-married folks down there at the Quiet Woman Inn?' the other inquired, pointing towards a dim light in the direction of the distant highway, but considerably apart from where the reddleman was at that moment resting. 'What's the rights of the matter about 'em? You ought to know, being an understanding man.'

'But a little rakish, hey? I own to it. Master Cantle is that, or he's nothing. Yet 'tis a gay fault, neighbour Fairway, that age will cure.'

'I heard that they were coming home to-night. By this time they must have come. What besides?'

'The next thing is for us to go and wish 'em joy, I suppose?'

'Well, no.'

'No? Now, I thought we must. I must, or 'twould be very unlike me—the first in every spree that's going!

"Do thou' put on' a fri'-ar's coat',
And I'll' put on' a-no'-ther,
And we' will to' Queen Ele'anor go'
Like Fri'ar and' his bro'-ther."

I met Mis'ess Yeobright, the young bride's aunt, last night, and she told me that her son Clym was coming home a' Christmas. Wonderful clever, 'a believe—ah, I should like to have all that's under that young man's hair. Well, then, I spoke to her in my well-known merry way, and she said, "O that what's shaped so venerable should talk like a fool!"—that's what she said to me. I don't care for her, be jowned if I do, and so I told her. "Be jowned if I care for 'ee," I said. I had her there—hey?'

'I rather think she had you,' said Fairway.

'No,' said Grandfer Cantle, his countenance slightly flagging. 'Tisn't so bad as that with me?'

'Seemingly 'tis; however, is it because of the wedding that Clym is coming home a' Christmas—to make a new arrangement because his mother is now left in the house alone?'

'Yes, yes—that's it. But, Timothy, hearken to me,' said the Grandfer earnestly. 'Though known as such a joker, I be an understanding man if you catch me serious, and I am serious now. I can tell 'ee lots about the married couple. Yes, this morning at six o'clock they went up the country to do the job, and neither vell nor mark have been seen of 'em since, though I reckon that this afternoon has brought 'em home again, man and woman—wife, that is. Isn't it spoke like a man, Timothy, and wasn't Mis'ess Yeobright wrong about me?'

'Yes, it will do. I didn't know the two had walked together since last fall,

when her mother forbad the banns. How long has this new set-to been in mangling then? Do you know, Humphrey?

'Yes, how long?' said Grandfer Cattle smartly, likewise turning to Humphrey. 'I ask that question.'

'Ever since her aunt altered her mind, and said she might hae the man after all,' replied Humphrey, without removing his eyes from the fire. He was a somewhat solemn young fellow, and carried the hook and leather gloves of a furze-cutter, his legs, by reason of that occupation, being sheathed in bulging leggings as stiff as the Philistine's greaves of brass. 'That's why they went away to be married, I count. You see, after kicking up such a nunny-watch and forbidding the banns 'twould have made Mis'ess Yeobright seem foolish-like to have a banging wedding in the same parish all as if she'd never gain-said it.'

'Exactly—seem foolish-like; and that's very bad for the poor things that be so, though I only guess as much, to be sure,' said Grandfer Cattle, still strenuously preserving a sensible bearing and mien.

'Ah, well, I was at church that day,' said Fairway, 'which was a very curious thing to happen.'

'If 'twasn't my name's Simple,' said the Grandfer emphatically. 'I ha'n't been there to-year; and now the winter is a'coming on I won't say I shall.'

'I ha'n't been these three years,' said Humphrey; 'for I'm so dead sleepy of a Sunday; and 'tis so terrible far to get there; and when you do get there 'tis such a mortal poor chance that you'll be chose for up above, when so many bain't, that I bide at home and don't go at all.'

'I not only happened to be there,' said Fairway, with a fresh collection of emphasis, 'but I was sitting in the same pew as Mis'ess Yeobright. And though you may not see it as such, it fairly made my blood run cold to hear her. Yes, it is a curious thing; but it made my blood run cold, for I was close at her elbow.' The speaker looked round upon the bystanders, now drawing closer to hear him, with his lips gathered tighter than ever in the rigorosness of his descriptive moderations.

''Tis a serious job to have things happen to 'ee there,' said a woman behind

'"Ye are to declare it," wez the parson's words,' Fairway continued. 'And then up stood a woman at my side—a touching of me. "Well, be damned if there isn't Mis'ess Yeobright a-standing up," I said to myself. Yes, neighbours, though I was in the temple of prayer that's what I said. 'Tis against my conscience to curse and swear in company, and I hope any woman here will overlook it. Still what I did say I did say, and 'twould be a lie if I didn't own it.'

'So 'twould, neighbour Fairway.'

'"Be damned if there isn't Mis'ess Yeobright a-standing up," I said,' the narrator repeated, giving out the bad word with the same passionless severity of face as before, which proved how entirely necessity and not gusto had to do with the iteration. 'And the next thing I heard was, "I forbid the banns," from her. "I'll speak to you after the service," said the parson, in quite a

homely way—yes, turning all at once into a common man no holier than you or I. Ah, her face was pale! Maybe you can call to mind that monument in church—the cross-legged soldier that have had his nose knocked away by the school-children? Well, he would about have matched that woman's face, when she said, "I forbid the banns."

The audience cleared their throats and tossed a few stalks into the fire, not because these deeds were urgent, but to give themselves time to weigh the moral of the story.

'I'm sure when I heard they'd been forbid I felt as glad as if anybody had gied me sixpence,' said an earnest voice—that of Olly Dowden, a woman who lived by making heath brooms, or besoms. Her nature was to be civil to enemies as well as to friends, and grateful to all the world for letting her remain alive.

'And now the maid have married him just the same,' said Humphrey.

'After that Mis'ess Yeobright came round and was quite agreeable,' Fairway resumed, with an unheeding air, to show that his words were no appendage to Humphrey's, but the result of independent reflection.

'Supposing they were ashamed, I don't see why they shouldn't have done it here-right,' said a wide-spread woman whose stays creaked like shoes whenever she stooped or turned. 'Tis well to call the neighbours together and to hae a good racket once now and then; and it may as well be when there's a wedding as at tide-times I don't care for close ways.'

'Ah, now, you'd hardly believe it, but I don't care for gay weddings,' said Timothy Fairway, his eyes again travelling round. 'I hardly blame Thomasin Yeobright and neighbour Wildeve for doing it quiet, if I must own it. A wedding at home means five and six-handed reels by the hour; and they do a man's legs no good when he's over forty.'

'True. Once at the woman's house you can hardly say nay to being one in a jig, knowing all the time that you be expected to make yourself worth your victuals.'

'You be bound to dance at Christmas because 'tis the time o' year; you must dance at weddings because 'tis the time o' life. At christenings folk will even smuggle in a reel or two, if 'tis no further on than the first or second chiel. And this is not naming the songs you've got to sing. . . . For my part I like a good hearty funeral as well as anything. You've as splendid victuals and drink as at other parties, and even better. And it don't wear your legs to stumps in talking over a poor fellow's ways as it do to stand up in hornpipes.'

'Nine folks out of ten would own 'twas going too far to dance then, I suppose?' said Grandfer Cante inquiringly.

'Tis the only sort of party a staid man can feel safe at after the mug have been round a few times.'

'Well, I can't understand a quiet lady-like little body like Tamsin Yeobright caring to be married in such a mean way,' said Susan Nunsuch, the wide woman, who preferred the original subject. 'Tis worse than the poorest do.

And I shouldn't have cared about the man, though some may say he's good-looking.'

'To give him his due he's a clever, learned fellow in his way—a'most as clever as Clym Yeobright used to be. He was brought up to better things than keeping the Quiet Woman. An engineer—that's what the man was, as we know; but he threw away his chance, and so 'a took a public-house to live. His learning was no use to him at all.'

'Very often the case,' said Olly, the besom-maker. 'And yet how people do strive after it and get it! The class of folk that couldn't use to make a round O to save their bones from the pit can write their names now without a sputter of the pen, oftentimes without a single blot: what do I say?—why, almost without a desk to lean their stomachs and elbows upon.'

'True: 'tis amazing what a polish the world have been brought to,' said Humphrey.

'Why, afore I went a soldier in the Bang-up Locals (as we was called), in the year four,' chimed in Grandfer Cattle brightly, 'I didn't know no more what the world was like than the commonest man among ye. And now, jown it all, I won't say what I bain't fit for, hey?'

'Couldst sign the book, no doubt,' said Fairway, 'if wast young enough to join hands with a woman again, like Wildeve and Mis'ess Tamsin, which is more than Humph there could do, for he follows his father in learning. Ah, Humph, well I can mind when I was married how I zid thy father's mark staring me in the face as I went to put down my name. He and your mother were the couple married just afore we were, and there stood thy father's cross with arms stretched out like a great banging scarecrow. What a terrible black cross that was—thy father's very likeness in en! To save my soul I couldn't help laughing when I zid en, though all the time I was as hot as dog-days, what with the marrying, and what with the woman a-hanging to me, and what with Jack Changley and a lot more chaps grinning at me through church window. But the next moment a strawmote would have knocked me down, for I called to mind that if thy father and mother had had high words once, they'd been at it twenty times since they'd been man and wife, and I zid myself as the next poor stunpoll to get into the same mess. . . . Ah—well, what a day 'twas!'

'Wildeve is older than Tamsin Yeobright by a good-few summers. A pretty maid too she is. A young woman with a home must be a fool to tear her smock for a man like that.'

The speaker, a peat or turf-cutter, who had newly joined the group, carried across his shoulder the singular heart-shaped spade of large dimensions used in that species of labour; and its well-whetted edge gleamed like a silver bow in the beams of the fire.

'A hundred maidens would have had him if he'd asked 'em,' said the wide woman.

'Didst ever know a man, neighbour, that no woman at all would marry?' inquired Humphrey.

'I never did,' said the turf-cutter.

'Nor I,' said another.

'Nor I,' said Grandfer Cantle.

'Well, now, I did once,' said Timothy Fairway, adding more firmness to one of his legs. 'I did know of such a man. But only once, mind.' He gave his throat a thorough rake round, as if it were the duty of every person not to be mistaken through thickness of voice. 'Yes, I knew of such a man,' he said.

'And what ghastly gallicrow might the poor fellow have been like, Master Fairway?' asked the turf-cutter.

'Well, 'a was neither a deaf man, nor a dumb man, nor a blind man. What 'a was I don't say.'

'Is he known in these parts?' said Olly Dowden.

'Hardly,' said Timothy; 'but I name no name. . . . Come, keep the fire up there, youngsters.'

'Whatever is Christian Cantle's teeth a-chattering for?' said a boy from amid the smoke and shades on the other side of the blaze. 'Be ye a-cold, Christian?'

A thin jibbering voice was heard to reply, 'No, not at all.'

'Come forward, Christian, and show yourself. I didn't know you were here,' said Fairway, with a humane look across towards that quarter.

Thus requested, a faltering man, with reedy hair, no shoulders, and a great quantity of wrist and ankle beyond his clothes, advanced a step or two by his own will, and was pushed by the will of others half a dozen steps more. He was Grandfer Cantle's youngest son.

'What be ye quaking for, Christian?' said the turf-cutter kindly.

'I'm the man.'

'What man?'

'The man no woman will marry.'

'The deuce you be!' said Timothy Fairway, enlarging his gaze to cover Christian's whole surface and a great deal more; Grandfer Cantle meanwhile staring as a hen stares at the duck she has hatched.

'Yes, I be he; and it makes me afeard,' said Christian. 'D'ye think 'twill hurt me? I shall always say I don't care, and swear to it, though I do care all the while.'

'Well, be damned if this isn't the queerest start ever I know'd,' said Mr. Fairway. 'I didn't mean you at all. There's another in the country, then! Why did ye reveal yer misfortune, Christian?'

''Twas to be if 'twas, I suppose. I can't help it, can I?' He turned upon them his painfully circular eyes, surrounded by concentric lines like targets.

'No, that's true. But 'tis a melancholy thing, and my blood ran cold when you spoke, for I felt there were two poor fellows where I had thought only one. 'Tis a sad thing for ye, Christian. How'st know the women won't hae thee?'

'I've asked 'em.'

'Sure I should never have thought you had the face. Well, and what did the last one say to ye? Nothing that can't be got over, perhaps, after all?'

'“Get out of my sight, you slack-twisted, slim-looking fool,” was the woman's words to me.'

'Not encouraging, I own,' said Fairway. '“Get out of my sight, you slack-twisted, slim-looking fool,” is rather a hard way of saying No. But even that might be overcome by time and patience, so as to let a few grey hairs show themselves in the hussy's head. How old be you, Christian?'

'Thirty-one last tattie-digging, Mister Fairway.'

'Not a boy—not a boy. Still there's hope yet.'

'That's my age by baptism, because that's put down in the great book of the Judgment—that they keep down in church vestry; but mother told me I was born some time afore I was christened.'

'Ah!'

'But she couldn't tell when, to save her life, except that there was no moon.'

'No moon: that's bad. Hey, neighbours, that's bad for him!'

'Yes, 'tis bad,' said Grandfer Cantle, shaking his head.

'Mother know'd 'twas no moon, for she asked another woman that had an almanac, as she did whenever a boy was born to her, because of the saying, 'No moon, no man,' which made her afeard every man-child she had. Do ye really think it serious, Mister Fairway, that there was no moon?'

'Yes; "No moon, no man." 'Tis one of the truest sayings ever spit out. The boy never comes to anything that's born at new moon. A bad job for thee, Christian, that you should have showed your nose then of all days in the month.'

'I suppose the moon was terrible full when you were born?' said Christian, with a look of hopeless admiration at Fairway.

'Well, 'a was not new,' Mr. Fairway replied, with a disinterested gaze.

'I'd sooner go without drink at Lammas-tide than be a man of no moon,' continued Christian, in the same shattered recitative. ' 'Tis said I be only the rames of a man, and no good for my race at all; and I suppose that's the cause o't.'

'Ay,' said Grandfer Cantle, somewhat subdued in spirit; 'and yet his mother cried for scores of hours when 'a was a boy, for fear he should outgrow himself and go for a soldier.'

'Well, there's many just as bad as he,' said Fairway. 'Wethers must live their time as well as other sheep, poor soul.'

'So perhaps I shall rub on? Ought I to be afeard o' nights, Master Fairway?'

'You'll have to lie alone all your life; and 'tis not to married couples but to single sleepers that a ghost shows himself when 'a do come. One has been seen lately, too. A very strange one.'

'No—don't talk about it if 'tis agreeable of ye not to! 'Twill make my skin crawl when I think of it in bed alone. But you will—ah, you will, I know, Timothy; and I shall dream all night o't! A very strange one? What sort of

a spirit did ye mean when ye said, a very strange one, Timothy?—no, no—don't tell me.'

'I don't half believe in spirits myself. But I think it ghostly enough—what I was told. 'Twas a little boy that zid it.'

'What was it like?—no, don't—'

'A red one. Yes, most ghosts be white; but this is as if it had been dipped in blood.'

Christian drew a deep breath without letting it expand his body, and Humphrey said, 'Where has it been seen?'

'Not exactly here; but in this same heth. But 'tisin't a thing to talk about. What do ye say,' continued Fairway in brisker tones, and turning upon them as if the idea had not been Grandfer Cante's—'what do you say to giving the new man and wife a bit of a song to-night afore we go to bed—being their wedding-day? When folks are just married 'tis as well to look glad o't, since looking sorry won't unjoin 'em. I am no drinker, as we know, but when the womenfolk and youngsters have gone home we can drop down across to the Quiet Woman, and strike up a ballet in front of the married folks' door. 'Twill please the young wife, and that's what I should like to do, for many's the skinful I've had at her hands when she lived with her aunt at Blooms-End.'

'Hey? And so we will!' said Grandfer Cante, turning so briskly that his copper seals swung extravagantly. 'I'm as dry as a kex with biding up here in the wind, and I haven't seen the colour of drink since nammet-time to-day. 'Tis said that the last brew at the Woman is very pretty drinking. And, neighbours, if we should be a little late in the finishing, why, to-morrow's Sunday, and we can sleep it off!'

'Grandfer Cante! you take things very careless for an old man,' said the wide woman.

'I take things careless; I do—too careless to please the women! Kik! I'll sing the "Jovial Crew," or any other song, when a weak old man would cry his eyes out. Jown it; I am up for anything.

"The king' look'-d o'-ver his left' shoul-der',
And a grim' look look'-ed hee',
Earl Mar'-shal, he said', but for' my oath'
Or hang'-ed thou' shouldst bee'."

'Well, that's what we'll do,' said Fairway. 'We'll give 'em a song, an' it please the Lord. What's the good of Thomasin's cousin Clym a-coming home after the deed's done? He should have come afore, if so be he wanted to stop it, and marry her himself.'

'Perhaps he's coming to bide with his mother a little time, as she must feel lonely now the maid's gone.'

'Now, 'tis very odd, but I never feel lonely—no, not at all,' said Grandfer Cante. 'I am as brave in the night-time as a' admiral!'

The bonfire was by this time beginning to sink low, for the fuel had not

been of that substantial sort which can support a blaze long. Most of the other fires within the wide horizon were also dwindling weak. Attentive observation of their brightness, colour, and length of existence would have revealed the quality of the material burnt; and through that, to some extent the natural produce of the district in which each bonfire was situate. The clear, kingly effulgence that had characterized the majority expressed a heath and furze country like their own, which in one direction extended an unlimited number of miles: the rapid flares and extinctions at other points of the compass showed the lightest of fuel—straw, beanstalks, and the usual waste from arable land. The most enduring of all—steady unaltering eyes like planets—signified wood, such as hazel-branches, thorn-faggots, and stout billets. Fires of the last-mentioned materials were rare, and, though comparatively small in magnitude beside the transient blazes, now began to get the best of them by mere long-continuance. The great ones had perished, but these remained. They occupied the remotest visible positions—sky-backed summits rising out of rich coppice and plantation districts to the north, where the soil was different, and heath foreign and strange.

Save one; and this was the nearest of any, the moon of the whole shining throng. It lay in a direction precisely opposite to that of the little window in the vale below. Its nearness was such that, notwithstanding its actual smallness, its glow infinitely transcended theirs.

This quiet eye had attracted attention from time to time; and when their own fire had become sunken and dim it attracted more; some even of the wood fires more recently lighted had reached their decline, but no change was perceptible here.

'To be sure, how near that fire is!' said Fairway. 'Seemingly, I can see a fellow of some sort walking round it. Little and good must be said of that fire, surely.'

'I can throw a stone there,' said the boy.

'And so can I!' said Grandfer Cante.

'No, no, you can't, my sonnies. That fire is not much less than a mile and a half off, for all that 'a seems so near.'

''Tis in the heath, but not furze,' said the turf-cutter.

''Tis cleft-wood, that's what 'tis,' said Timothy Fairway. 'Nothing would burn like that except clean timber. And 'tis on the knap afore the old captain's house at Mistover. Such a queer mortal as that man is! To have a little fire inside your own bank and ditch, that nobody else may enjoy it or come anigh it! And what a zany an old chap must be, to light a bonfire when there's no youngsters to please.'

'Cap'n Vye has been for a long walk to-day, and is quite tired out,' said Grandfer Cante, 'so 'tisn't likely to be he.'

'And he would hardly afford good fuel like that,' said the wide woman.

'Then it must be his grand-daughter,' said Fairway. 'Not that a body of her age can want a fire much.'

'She is very strange in her ways, living up there by herself, and such things please her,' said Susan.

'She's a well-favoured maid enough,' said Humphrey the furze-cutter; 'especially when she's got one of her dandy gowns on.'

'That's true,' said Fairway. 'Well, let her bonfire burn an't will. Ours is well-nigh out by the look o't.'

'How dark 'tis now the fire's gone down!' said Christian Cantle, looking behind him with his hare eyes. 'Don't ye think we'd better get home-along, neighbours? The heth isn't haunted, I know; but we'd better get home. . . . Ah, what was that?'

'Only the wind,' said the turf-cutter.

'I don't think Fifth-of-Novembers ought to be kept up by night except in towns. It should be by day in outstep, ill-accounted places like this!'

'Nonsense, Christian. Lift up your spirits like a man! Susy, dear, you and I will have a jig—hey, my honey?—before 'tis quite too dark to see how well-favoured you be still, though so many summers have passed since your husband, a son of a witch, snapped you up from me.'

This was addressed to Susan Nunsuch; and the next circumstance of which the beholders were conscious was a vision of the matron's broad form whisking off towards the space whereon the fire had been kindled. She was lifted bodily by Mr. Fairway's arm, which had been flung round her waist before she had become aware of his intention. The site of the fire was now merely a circle of ashes flecked with red embers and sparks, the furze having burnt completely away. Once within the circle he whirled her round and round in a dance. She was a woman noisily constructed; in addition to her enclosing framework of whalebone and lath, she wore pattens summer and winter, in wet weather and in dry, to preserve her boots from wear; and when Fairway began to jump about with her, the clicking of the pattens, the creaking of the stays, and her screams of surprise, formed a very audible concert.

'I'll crack thy numskull for thee, you mandy chap,' said Mrs. Nunsuch, as she helplessly danced round with him, her feet playing like drumsticks among the sparks. 'My ancles were all in a fever afore, from walking through that prickly furze, and now you must make 'em worse with these vlankers!'

The vagary of Timothy Fairway was infectious. The turf-cutter seized old Olly Dowden, and, somewhat more gently, pousetted with her likewise. The young men were not slow to imitate the example of their elders, and seized the maids; Grandfer Cantle and his stick jiggled in the form of a three-legged object among the rest; and in half a minute all that could be seen on Rainbarrow was a whirling of dark shapes amid a boiling confusion of sparks, which leapt around the dancers as high as their waists. The chief noises were women's shrill cries, men's laughter, Susan's stays and pattens, Olly Dowden's 'heu-heu-heu!' and the strumming of the wind upon the furze-bushes, which formed a kind of tune to the demoniac measure they trod. Christian alone stood aloof, uneasily rocking himself as he murmured, 'They ought not to do it—how the vlankers do fly! 'tis tempting the Wicked one, 'tis.'

'What was that?' said one of the lads, stopping.

'Ah—where?' said Christian, hastily closing up to the rest.

The dancers all lessened their speed.

'Twas behind you, Christian, that I heard it—down there.'

'Yes—'tis behind me!' Christian said. 'Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, bless the bed that I lie on; four angels guard—'

'Hold your tongue. What is it?' said Fairway.

'Hoi-i-i-i!' cried a voice from the darkness.

'Halloo-o-o-o!' said Fairway.

'Is there any cart-track up across here to Mis'ess Yeobright's, of Blooms-End?' came to them in the same voice, as a long, slim, indistinct figure approached the barrow.

'Ought we not to run home as hard as we can, neighbours, as 'tis getting late?' said Christian. 'Not run away from one another, you know; run close together, I mean.'

'Scrape up a few stray locks of furze, and make a blaze, so that we can see who the man is,' said Fairway.

When the flame arose it revealed a young man in tight raiment, and red from top to toe. 'Is there a track across here to Mis'ess Yeobright's house?' he repeated.

'Ay—keep along the path down there.'

'I mean a way two horses and a van can travel over'

'Well, yes; you can get up the vale below here with time. The track is rough, but if you've got a light your horses may pick along wi' care. Have ye brought your cart far up, neighbour reddleman?'

'I've left it in the bottom, about half a mile back. I stepped on in front to make sure of the way, as 'tis night-time, and I han't been here for so long.'

'Oh, well, you can get up,' said Fairway. 'What a turn it did give me when I zid him!' he added to the whole group, the reddleman included. 'Lord's sake, I thought, whatever fiery mommet is this come to trouble us? No slight to your looks, reddleman, for ye bain't bad-looking in the ground-work, though the finish is queer. My meaning is just to say how curious I felt. I half thought it 'twas the devil or the red ghost the boy told of.'

'It gied me a turn likewise,' said Susan Nunsuch, 'for I had a dream last night of a death's head.'

'Don't ye talk o't no more,' said Christian. 'If he had a handkerchief over his head he'd look for all the world like the Devil in the picture of the Temptation.'

'Well, thank you for telling me,' said the young reddleman, smiling faintly. 'And good night t'ye all.'

He withdrew from their sight down the barrow.

'I fancy I've seen that young man's face before,' said Humphrey. 'But where, or how, or what his name is, I don't know.'

The reddleman had not been gone more than a few minutes when another person approached the partially revived bonfire. It proved to be a well-known

and respected widow of the neighbourhood, of a standing which can only be expressed by the word genteel. Her face, encompassed by the blackness of the receding heath, showed whitely, and without half-lights, like a cameo.

She was a woman of middle-age, with well-formed features of the type usually found where perspicacity is the chief quality enthroned within. At moments she seemed to be regarding issues from a Nebo denied to others around. She had something of an estranged mien: the solitude exhaled from the heath was concentrated in this face that had arisen from it. The air with which she looked at the heathmen betokened a certain unconcern at their presence, or at what might be their opinions of her for walking in that lonely spot at such an hour, thus indirectly implying that in some respect or other they were not up to her level. The explanation lay in the fact that though her husband had been a small farmer she herself was a curate's daughter, who had once dreamt of doing better things.

Persons with any weight of character carry, like planets, their atmospheres along with them in their orbits; and the matron who entered now upon the scene could, and usually did, bring her own tone into a company. Her normal manner among the heathfolk had that reticence which results from the consciousness of superior communicative power. But the effect of coming into society and light after lonely wandering in darkness is a sociability in the comer above its usual pitch, expressed in the features even more than in the words.

'Why, 'tis Mis'ess Yeobright,' said Fairway. 'Mis'ess Yeobright, not ten minutes ago a man was here asking for you—a reddleman.'

'What did he want?' said she.

'He didn't tell us.'

'Something to sell, I suppose; what it can be I am at a loss to understand.'

'I am glad to hear that your son Mr. Clym is coming home at Christmas, ma'am,' said Sam, the turf-cutter. 'What a dog he used to be for bonfires!'

'Yes. I believe he is coming,' she said.

'He must be a fine fellow by this time,' said Fairway.

'He is a man now,' she replied quietly.

''Tis very lonesome for 'ee in the heth to-night, mis'ess,' said Christian, coming from the seclusion he had hitherto maintained. 'Mind you don't get lost. Egdon Heth is a bad place to get lost in, and the winds do huffle queerer to-night than ever I heard 'em afore. Them that know Egdon best have been pixy-led here at times.'

'Is that you, Christian?' said Mrs. Yeobright. 'What made you hide away from me?'

''Twas that I didn't know you in this light, mis'ess; and being a man of the mournfulest make, I was scared a little, that's all. Oftentimes if you could see how terrible down I get in my mind, 'twould make 'ee quite nervous for fear I should die by my hand.'

'You don't take after your father,' said Mrs. Yeobright, looking towards the fire, where Grandfer Cantle, with some want of originality, was dancing by himself among the sparks, as the others had done before.

'Now, Grandfer,' said Timothy Fairway, 'we are ashamed of ye. A reverent old patriarch man as you be—seventy if a day—to go hornpiping like that by yourself!'

'A harrowing old man, Mis'ess Yeobright,' said Christian despondingly. 'I wouldn't live with him a week, so playward as he is, if I could get away.'

''Twould be more seemly in ye to stand still and welcome Mis'ess Yeobright, and you the venerablest here, Grandfer Cantle,' said the besom-woman.

'Faith, and so it would,' said the reveller, checking himself repentantly. 'I've such a bad memory, Mis'ess Yeobright, that I forget how I'm looked up to by the rest of 'em. My spirits must be wonderful good, you'll say? But not always. 'Tis a weight upon a man to be looked up to as commander, and I often feel it.'

'I am sorry to stop the talk,' said Mrs. Yeobright. 'But I must be leaving you now. I am crossing the heath towards my niece's new home, who is returning to-night with her husband; and hearing Olly's voice I came up here to ask her if she would soon be going home; I should like her to walk with me, as her way is mine.'

'Ay, sure, ma'am, I'm just thinking of moving,' said Olly.

'Why, you'll be safe to meet the reddleman that I told ye of,' said Fairway. 'He's only gone back to get his van. We heard that your niece and her husband were coming straight home as soon as they were married, and we are going down there shortly, to give 'em a song o' welcome.'

'Thank you indeed,' said Mrs. Yeobright.

'But we shall take a shorter cut through the furze than you can go with long clothes; so we won't trouble you to wait.'

'Very well—are you ready, Olly?'

'Yes, ma'am. And there's a light shining from your niece's window, see. It will help to keep us in the path.'

She indicated the faint light at the bottom of the valley which Fairway had pointed out; and the two women descended the barrow.

IV. THE HALT ON THE TURNPIKE ROAD

DOWN, downward they went, and yet further down—their descent at each step seeming to outmeasure their advance. Their skirts were scratched noisily by the furze, their shoulders brushed by the ferns, which, though dead and dry, stood erect as when alive, no sufficient winter weather having as yet arrived to beat them down. Their Tartarean situation might by some have been called an imprudent one for two unattended women. But these shaggy recesses were at all seasons a familiar surrounding to Olly and Mrs. Yeobright; and the addition of darkness lends no frightfulness to the face of a friend.

'And so Tamsin has married him at last,' said Olly, when the incline had

become so much less steep that their footsteps no longer required undivided attention.

Mrs. Yeobright answered slowly, 'Yes: at last.'

'How you will miss her—living with ye as a daughter, as she always have.'
'I do miss her.'

Olly, though without the tact to perceive when remarks were untimely, was saved by her very simplicity from rendering them offensive. Questions that would have been resented in others she could ask with impunity. This accounted for Mrs. Yeobright's acquiescence in the revival of an evidently sore subject.

'I was quite strook to hear you'd agreed to it, ma'am, that I was,' continued the besom-maker.

'You were not more struck by it than I should have been last year this time, Olly. There are a good many sides to that wedding. I could not tell you all of them, even if I tried.'

'I felt myself that he was hardly solid-going enough to mate with your family. Keeping an inn—what is it? But 'a's clever, that's true, and they say he was an engineering gentleman once, but has come down by being too outwardly given.'

'I saw that, upon the whole, it would be better she should marry where she wished.'

'Poor little thing, her feelings got the better of her, no doubt. 'Tis nature. Well, they may call him what they will—he've several acres of heath ground broke up here, besides the public-house, and the heth-croppers, and his manners be quite like a gentleman's. And what's done cannot be undone.'

'It cannot,' said Mrs. Yeobright. 'See, here's the waggon-track at last. Now we shall get along better.'

The wedding subject was no further dwelt upon; and soon a faint diverging path was reached, where they parted company, Olly first begging her companion to remind Mr. Wildeve that he had not sent her sick husband the bottle of wine promised on the occasion of his marriage. The besom-maker turned to the left towards her own house, behind a spur of the hill, and Mrs. Yeobright followed the straight track, which further on joined the highway by the Quiet Woman Inn, whither she supposed her niece to have returned with Wildeve from their wedding at Anglebury that day.

She first reached Wildeve's Patch, as it was called, a plot of land redeemed from the heath, and after long and laborious years brought into cultivation. The man who had discovered that it could be tilled died of the labour: the man who succeeded him in possession ruined himself in fertilizing it. Wildeve came like Amerigo Vespucci, and received the honours due to those who had gone before.

When Mrs. Yeobright had drawn near to the inn, and was about to enter, she saw a horse and vehicle some two hundred yards beyond it, coming towards her, a man walking alongside with a lantern in his hand. It was soon

evident that this was the reddleman who had inquired for her. Instead of entering the inn at once, she walked by it and towards the van.

The conveyance came close, and the man was about to pass her with little notice, when she turned to him and said, 'I think you have been inquiring for me? I am Mrs Yeobright of Blooms-End.'

The reddleman started, and held up his finger. He stopped the horses, and beckoned to her to withdraw with him a few yards aside, which she did, wondering.

'You don't know me, ma'am, I suppose?' he said.

'I do not,' said she. 'Why, yes, I do! You are young Venn—your father was a dairyman somewhere here?'

'Yes; and I knew your niece, Miss Tamsin, a little. I have something bad to tell you.'

'About her—no? She has just come home, I believe, with her husband. They arranged to return this afternoon—to the inn beyond here?'

'She's not there.'

'How do you know?'

'Because she's here. She's in my van,' he added slowly.

'What new trouble has come?' murmured Mrs. Yeobright, putting her hand over her eyes.

'I can't explain much, ma'am. All I know is that, as I was going along the road this morning, about a mile out of Anglebury, I heard something trotting after me like a doe, and looking round there she was, white as death itself. "Oh, Diggory Venn!" she said, "I thought 'twas you: will you help me? I am in trouble."'

'How did she know your Christian name?' said Mrs. Yeobright doubtfully.

'I had met her as a lad before I went away in this trade. She asked then if she might ride, and then down she fell in a faint. I picked her up and put her in, and there she has been ever since. She has cried a good deal, but she has hardly spoke; all she has told me being that she was to have been married this morning. I tried to get her to eat something, but she couldn't; and at last she fell asleep.'

'Let me see her at once,' said Mrs. Yeobright, hastening towards the van.

The reddleman followed with the lantern, and, stepping up first, assisted Mrs. Yeobright to mount beside him. On the door being opened she perceived at the end of the van an extemporized couch, around which was hung apparently all the drapery that the reddleman possessed, to keep the occupant of the little couch from contact with the red materials of his trade. A young girl lay thereon, covered with a cloak. She was asleep, and the light of the lantern fell upon her features.

A fair, sweet, and honest country face was revealed, reposing in a nest of wavy chestnut hair. It was between pretty and beautiful. Though her eyes were closed, one could easily imagine the light necessarily shining in them as the culmination of the luminous workmanship around. The groundwork of the face was hopefulness; but over it now lay like a foreign substance a film

of anxiety and grief. The grief had been there so shortly as to have abstracted nothing of the bloom which had as yet but given a dignity to what it might eventually undermine. The scarlet of her lips had not had time to abate, and just now it appeared still more intense by the absence of the neighbouring and more transient colour of her cheek. The lips frequently parted, with a murmur of words. She seemed to belong rightly to a madrigal—to require viewing through rhyme and harmony.

One thing at least was obvious: she was not made to be looked at thus. The reddleman had appeared conscious of as much, and, while Mrs. Yeobright looked in upon her, he cast his eyes aside with a delicacy which well became him. The sleeper apparently thought so too, for the next moment she opened her eyes.

The lips then parted with something of anticipation, something more of doubt; and her several thoughts and fractions of thoughts, as signalled by the changes on her face, were exhibited by the light to the utmost nicety. An ingenuous, transparent life was disclosed; as if the flow of her existence could be seen passing within her. She understood the scene in a moment.

‘O yes, it is I, aunt,’ she cried. ‘I know how frightened you are, and how you cannot believe it; but all the same, it is I who have come home like this!’

‘Tamsin, Tamsin!’ said Mrs. Yeobright, stooping over the young woman and kissing her. ‘O my dear girl!’

Thomasin was now on the verge of a sob; but by an unexpected self-command she uttered no sound. With a gentle panting breath she sat upright.

‘I did not expect to see you in this state, any more than you me,’ she went on quickly. ‘Where am I, aunt?’

‘Nearly home, my dear. In Egdon Bottom. What dreadful thing is it?’

‘I’ll tell you in a moment. So near, are we? Then I will get out and walk. I want to go home by the path.’

‘But this kind man who has done so much will, I am sure, take you right on to my house?’ said the aunt, turning to the reddleman, who had withdrawn from the front of the van on the awakening of the girl, and stood in the road.

‘Why should you think it necessary to ask me? I will, of course,’ said he.

‘He is indeed kind,’ murmured Thomasin. ‘I was once acquainted with him, aunt, and when I saw him to-day I thought I should prefer his van to any conveyance of a stranger. But I’ll walk now. Reddleman, stop the horses, please.’

The man regarded her with tender reluctance, but stopped them.

Aunt and niece then descended from the van, Mrs. Yeobright saying to its owner, ‘I quite recognize you now. What made you change from the nice business your father left you?’

‘Well, I did,’ he said, and looked at Thomasin, who blushed a little. ‘Then you’ll not be wanting me any more to-night, ma’am?’

Mrs. Yeobright glanced around at the dark sky, at the hills, at the perishing bonfires, and at the lighted window of the inn they had neared. ‘I think not,’

she said, 'since Thomasin wishes to walk. We can soon run up the path and reach home: we know it well.'

And after a few further words they parted, the reddleman moving onwards with his van, and the two women remaining standing in the road. As soon as the vehicle and its driver had withdrawn so far as to be beyond all possible reach of her voice, Mrs. Yeobright turned to her niece.

'Now, Thomasin,' she said sternly, 'what's the meaning of this disgraceful performance?'

V. PERPLEXITY AMONG HONEST PEOPLE

THOMASIN looked as if quite overcome by her aunt's change of manner. 'It means just what it seems to mean: I am—not married,' she replied faintly. 'Excuse me—for humiliating you, aunt, by this mishap: I am sorry for it. But I cannot help it.'

'Me? Think of yourself first.'

'It was nobody's fault. When we got there the parson wouldn't marry us because of some trifling irregularity in the licence.'

'What irregularity?'

'I don't know. Mr. Wildeve can explain. I did not think when I went away this morning that I should come back like this.' It being dark, Thomasin allowed her emotion to escape her by the silent way of tears, which could roll down her cheek unseen.

'I could almost say that it serves you right—if I did not feel that you don't deserve it,' continued Mrs. Yeobright, who, possessing two distinct moods in close contiguity, a gentle mood and an angry, flew from one to the other without the least warning. 'Remember, Thomasin, this business was none of my seeking; from the very first, when you began to feel foolish about that man, I warned you he would not make you happy. I felt it so strongly that I did what I would never have believed myself capable of doing—stood up in the church, and made myself the public talk for weeks. But having once consented, I don't submit to these fancies without good reason. Marry him you must after this.'

'Do you think I wish to do otherwise for one moment?' said Thomasin, with a heavy sigh. 'I know how wrong it was of me to love him, but don't pain me by talking like that, aunt! You would not have had me stay there with him, would you?—and your house is the only home I have to return to. He says we can be married in a day or two.'

'I wish he had never seen you.'

'Very well; then I will be the miserablest woman in the world, and not let him see me again. No, I won't have him!'

'It is too late to speak so. Come with me. I am going to the inn to see if he has returned. Of course I shall get to the bottom of this story at once.'

Mr. Wildeve must not suppose he can play tricks upon me, or any belonging to me.'

'It was not that. The licence was wrong, and he couldn't get another the same day. He will tell you in a moment how it was, if he comes.'

'Why didn't he bring you back?'

'That was me!' again sobbed Thomasin. 'When I found we could not be married I didn't like to come back with him, and I was very ill. Then I saw Diggory Venn, and was glad to get him to take me home. I cannot explain it any better, and you must be angry with me if you will.'

'I shall see about that,' said Mrs. Yeobright; and they turned towards the inn, known in the neighbourhood as the Quiet Woman, the sign of which represented the figure of a matron carrying her head under her arm. The front of the house was towards the heath and Rainbarrow, whose dark shape seemed to threaten it from the sky. Upon the door was a neglected brass plate, bearing the unexpected inscription, 'Mr. Wildeve, Engineer'—a useless yet cherished relic from the time when he had been started in that profession in an office at Budmouth by those who had hoped much from him, and had been disappointed. The garden was at the back, and behind this ran a still deep stream, forming the margin of the heath in this direction, meadow-land appearing beyond the stream.

But the thick obscurity permitted only sky-lines to be visible of any scene at present. The water at the back of the house could be heard, idly spinning whirlpools in its creep between the rows of dry featherheaded reeds which formed a stockade along each bank. Their presence was denoted by sounds as of a congregation praying humbly, produced by their rubbing against each other in the slow wind.

The window, whence the candlelight had shone up the vale to the eyes of the bonfire group, was uncurtained, but the sill lay too high for a pedestrian on the outside to look over it into the room. A vast shadow, in which could be dimly traced portions of a masculine contour, blotted half the ceiling.

'He seems to be at home,' said Mrs. Yeobright.

'Must I come in, too, aunt?' asked Thomasin, faintly. 'I suppose not; it would be wrong.'

'You must come, certainly—to confront him, so that he may make no false representations to me. We shall not be five minutes in the house, and then we'll walk home.'

Entering the open passage, she tapped at the door of the private parlour, unfastened it, and looked in.

The back and shoulders of a man came between Mrs. Yeobright's eyes and the fire. Wildeve, whose form it was, immediately turned, arose, and advanced to meet his visitors.

He was quite a young man, and of the two properties, form and motion, the latter first attracted the eye in him. The grace of his movement was singular: it was the pantomimic expression of a lady-killing career. Next came into notice the more material qualities, among which was a profuse crop of

hair impending over the top of his face, lending to his forehead the high-cornered outline of an early Gothic shield; and a neck which was smooth and round as a cylinder. The lower half of his figure was of light build. Altogether he was one in whom no man would have seen anything to admire, and in whom no woman would have seen anything to dislike.

He discerned the young girl's form in the passage, and said, 'Thomasin, then, has reached home. How could you leave me in that way, darling?' And turning to Mrs Yeobright: 'It was useless to argue with her. She would go, and go alone.'

'But what's the meaning of it all?' demanded Mrs. Yeobright haughtily.

'Take a seat,' said Wildev, placing chairs for the two women. 'Well, it was a very stupid mistake, but such mistakes will happen. The licence was useless at Anglebury. It was made out for Budmouth, but as I didn't read it I wasn't aware of that.'

'But you had been staying at Anglebury?'

'No. I had been at Budmouth—till two days ago—and that was where I had intended to take her; but when I came to fetch her we decided upon Anglebury, forgetting that a new licence would be necessary. There was not time to get to Budmouth afterwards.'

'I think you are very much to blame,' said Mrs. Yeobright.

'It was quite my fault we chose Anglebury,' Thomasin pleaded. 'I proposed it because I was not known there.'

'I know so well that I am to blame that you need not remind me of it,' replied Wildev shortly.

'Such things don't happen for nothing,' said the aunt. 'It is a great slight to me and my family; and when it gets known there will be a very unpleasant time for us. How can she look her friends in the face to-morrow? It is a very great injury, and one I cannot easily forgive. It may even reflect on her character.'

'Nonsense,' said Wildev.

Thomasin's large eyes had flown from the face of one to the face of the other during this discussion, and she now said anxiously, 'Will you allow me, aunt, to talk it over alone with Damon for five minutes? Will you, Damon?'

'Certainly, dear,' said Wildev, 'if your aunt will excuse us.' He led her into an adjoining room, leaving Mrs. Yeobright by the fire.

As soon as they were alone, and the door closed, Thomasin said, turning up her pale, tearful face to him, 'It is killing me, this, Damon! I did not mean to part from you in anger at Anglebury this morning; but I was frightened, and hardly knew what I said. I've not let aunt know how much I have suffered to-day; and it is so hard to command my face and voice, and to smile as if it were a slight thing to me; but I try to do so, that she may not be still more indignant with you. I know you could not help it, dear, whatever aunt may think.'

'She is very unpleasant.'

'Yes,' Thomasin murmured, 'and I suppose I seem so now. . . . Damon, what do you mean to do about me?'

'Do about you?'

'Yes. Those who don't like you whisper things which at moments make me doubt you. We mean to marry, I suppose, don't we?'

'Of course we do. We have only to go to Budmouth on Monday, and we may marry at once.'

'Then do let us go!—O Damon, what you make me say!' She hid her face in her handkerchief. 'Here am I asking you to marry me; when by rights you ought to be on your knees imploring me, your cruel mistress, not to refuse you, and saying it would break your heart if I did. I used to think it would be pretty and sweet like that; but how different!'

'Yes, real life is never at all like that.'

'But I don't care personally if it never takes place,' she added with a little dignity; 'no, I can live without you. It is aunt I think of. She is so proud, and thinks so much of her family respectability, that she will be cut down with mortification if this story should get abroad before—it is done. My cousin Clym, too, will be much wounded.'

'Then he will be very unreasonable. In fact, you are all rather unreasonable.'

Thomasin coloured a little, and not with love. But whatever the momentary feeling which caused that flush in her, it went as it came, and she humbly said, 'I never mean to be, if I can help it. I merely feel that you have my aunt to some extent in your power at last.'

'As a matter of justice it is almost due to me,' said Wildeve. 'Think what I have gone through to win her consent; the insult that it is to any man to have the banns forbidden: the double insult to a man unlucky enough to be cursed with sensitiveness, and blue demons, and Heaven knows what, as I am. I can never forget those banns. A harsher man would rejoice now in the power I have of turning upon your aunt by going no further in the business.'

She looked wistfully at him with her sorrowful eyes as he said those words, and her aspect showed that more than one person in the room could deplore the possession of sensitiveness. Seeing that she was really suffering he seemed disturbed and added, 'This is merely a reflection, you know. I have not the least intention to refuse to complete the marriage, Tamsie mine—I could not bear it.'

'You could not, I know!' said the fair girl, brightening. 'You, who cannot bear the sight of pain in even an insect, or any disagreeable sound, or unpleasant smell even, will not long cause pain to me and mine.'

'I will not, if I can help it.'

'Your hand upon it, Damon.'

He carelessly gave her his hand.

'Ah, by my crown, what's that?' he said suddenly.

There fell upon their ears the sound of numerous voices singing in front

of the house. Among these, two made themselves prominent by their peculiarity: one was a very strong bass, the other a wheezy thin piping. Thomasin recognized them as belonging to Timothy Fairway and Grandfer Cante respectively.

'What does it mean—it is not skimmity-riding, I hope?' she said, with a frightened gaze at Wildeve.

'Of course not; no, it is that the heath-folk have come to sing to us a welcome. This is intolerable!' He began pacing about, the men outside singing cheerily—

'He told' her that she' was the joy' of his life',
And if' she'd con-sent' he would make' her his wife';
She could' not refuse' him; to church' so they went',
Young Will' was forgot', and young Sue' was con-tent';
And then' was she kiss'd' and set down' on his knee',
No man' in the world' was so lov'-ing as he'!

Mrs. Yeobright burst in from the outer room. 'Thomasin, Thomasin!' she said, looking indignantly at Wildeve; 'here's a pretty exposure! Let us escape at once. Come!'

It was, however, too late to get away by the passage. A rugged knocking had begun upon the door of the front room. Wildeve, who had gone to the window, came back.

'Stop!' he said imperiously, putting his hand upon Mrs. Yeobright's arm. 'We are regularly besieged. There are fifty of them out there if there's one. You stay in this room with Thomasin; I'll go out and face them. You must stay now, for my sake, till they are gone, so that it may seem as if all was right. Come, Tamsie dear, don't go making a scene—we must marry after this; that you can see as well as I. Sit still, that's all—and don't speak much. I'll manage them. Blundering fools!'

He pressed the agitated girl into a seat, returned to the outer room and opened the door. Immediately outside, in the passage, appeared Grandfer Cante singing in concert with those still standing in front of the house. He came into the room and nodded abstractedly to Wildeve, his lips still parted, and his features excruciatingly strained in the emission of the chorus. This being ended, he said heartily, 'Here's welcome to the new-made couple, and God bless 'em!'

'Thank you,' said Wildeve, with dry resentment, his face as gloomy as a thunderstorm.

At the Grandfer's heels now came the rest of the group, which included Fairway, Christian, Sam the turf-cutter, Humphrey, and a dozen others. All smiled upon Wildeve, and upon his tables and chairs likewise, from a general sense of friendliness towards the articles as well as towards their owner.

'We be not here afore Mrs. Yeobright after all,' said Fairway, recognizing the matron's bonnet through the glass partition which divided the public

apartment they had entered from the room where the women sat. 'We struck down across, d'ye see, Mr. Wildeve, and she went round by the path.'

'And I see the young bride's little head!' said Grandfer, peeping in the same direction, and discerning Thomasin, who was waiting beside her aunt in a miserable and awkward way. 'Not quite settled yet—well, well, there's plenty of time.'

Wildeve made no reply; and probably feeling that the sooner he treated them the sooner they would go, he produced a stone jar, which threw a warm halo over matters at once.

'That's a drop of the right sort, I can see,' said Grandfer Cattle, with the air of a man too well-mannered to show any hurry to taste it.

'Yes,' said Wildeve, 'tis some old mead. I hope you will like it.'

'Oh ay,' replied the guests, in the hearty tones natural when the words demanded by politeness coincide with those of deepest feeling. 'There isn't a prettier drink under the sun.'

'I'll take my oath there isn't,' added Grandfer Cattle. 'All that can be said against mead is that 'tis rather heady, and apt to lie about a man a good while. But to-morrow's Sunday, thank God.'

'I feel'd for all the world like some bold soldier after I had had some once,' said Christian.

'You shall feel so again,' said Wildeve, with condescension. 'Cups or glasses, gentlemen?'

'Well, if you don't mind, we'll have the beaker, and pass 'en round; 'tis better than heling it out in dribbles.'

'Jown the slippery glasses,' said Grandfer Cattle. 'What's the good of a thing that you can't put down in the ashes to warm, hey, neighbours; that's what I ask?'

'Right, Grandfer,' said Sam; and the mead then circulated.

'Well,' said Timothy Fairway, feeling demands upon his praise in some form or other, 'tis a worthy thing to be married, Mr. Wildeve; and the woman you've got is a dimant, so says I. Yes,' he continued, to Grandfer Cattle, raising his voice so as to be heard through the partition; 'her father (inclining his head towards the inner room) was as good a feller as ever lived. He always had his great indignation ready against anything underhand.'

'Is that very dangerous?' said Christian.

'And there were few in these parts that were upsides with him,' said Sam. 'Whenever a club walked he'd play the clarinet in the band that marched before 'em as if he'd never touched anything but a clarinet all his life. And then, when they got to church-door he'd throw down the clarinet, mount the gallery, snatch up the bass-viol, and rozum away as if he'd never played anything but a bass-viol. Folk would say—folk that knowed what a true stave was—"Surely, surely that's never the same man that I zid handling the clarinet so masterly by now!"'

'I can mind it,' said the furze-cutter. 'Twas a wonderful thing that one body could hold it all and never mix the fingering.'

'There was Kingsbere church likewise,' Fairway recommenced, as one opening a new vein of the same mine of interest.

Wildevé breathed the breath of one intolerably bored, and glanced through the partition at the prisoners.

'He used to walk over there of a Sunday afternoon to visit his old acquaintance Andrew Brown, the first clarinet there; a good man enough, but rather screechy in his music. if you can mind?'

'A was.'

'And neighbour Yeobright would take Andrey's place for some part of the service, to let Andrey have a bit of a nap, as any friend would naturally do.'

'As any friend would,' said Grandfer Cante, the other listeners expressing the same accord by the shorter way of nodding their heads.

'No sooner was Andrey asleep and the first whiff of neighbour Yeobright's wind had got inside Andrey's clarinet than every one in church feel'd in a moment there was a great soul among 'em. All heads would turn, and they'd say, "Ah, I thought 'twas he!" One Sunday I can well mind—a bass-viol day that time, and Yeobright had brought his own. 'Twas the Hundred-and-thirty-third to "Lydia;" and when they'd come to, "Ran down his beard and o'er his robes its costly moisture shed," neighbour Yeobright, who had just warmed to his work, drove his bow into them strings that glorious grand that he e'en a'most saw'd the bass-viol into two pieces. Every winder in church rattled as if 'twere a thunderstorm. Old Pa'son Gibbons lifted his hands in his great holy surplice as natural as if he'd been in common clothes, and seemed to say to hisself, "Oh for such a man in our parish!" But not a soul in Kingsbere could hold a candle to Yeobright.'

'Was it quite safe when the winder shook?' Christian inquired.

He received no answer; all for the moment sitting rapt in admiration of the performance described. As with Farinelli's singing before the princesses, Sheridan's renowned Begum Speech, and other such examples, the fortunate condition of its being for ever lost to the world invested the deceased Mr. Yeobright's *tour de force* on that memorable afternoon with a cumulative glory which comparative criticism, had that been possible, might considerably have shorn down.

'He was the last you'd have expected to drop off in the prime of life,' said Humphrey.

'Ah, well: he was looking for the earth some months afore he went. At that time women used to run for smocks and gown-pieces at Greenhill Fair, and my wife that is now, being a long-legged slithering maid, hardly husband-high, went with the rest of the maidens, for 'a was a good runner afore she got so heavy. When she came home I said—we were then just beginning to walk together—"What have ye got, my honey?" "I've won—well, I've won—a gown-piece," says she, her colours coming up in a moment. 'Tis a smock for a crown, I thought; and so it turned out. Ay, when I think what she'll

say to me now without a mossel of red in her face, it do seem strange that 'a wouldn't say such a little thing then. . . . However, then she went on, and that's what made me bring up the story, "Well, whatever clothes I've won, white or figured, for eyes to see or for eyes not to see" ('a could do a pretty stroke of modesty in those days), "I'd sooner have lost it than have seen what I have. Poor Mr. Yeobright was took bad directly he reached the fair ground, and was forced to go home again." That was the last time he ever went out of the parish.'

'A faltered on from one day to another, and then we heard he was gone.'

'D'ye think he had great pain when 'a died?' said Christian.

'O no: quite different. Nor any pain of mind. He was lucky enough to be God A'mighty's own man.'

'And other folk—d'ye think 'twill be much pain to 'em, Master Fairway?'

'That depends on whether they be afeard.'

'I bain't afeard at all, I thank God!' said Christian strenuously. 'I'm glad I bain't, for then 'twon't pain me. . . . I don't think I be afeard—or if I be I can't help it, and I don't deserve to suffer. I wish I was not afeard at all!'

There was a solemn silence, and looking from the window, which was unshuttered and unblinded, Timothy said, 'Well, what a fess little bonfire that one is, out by Cap'n Vye's! 'Tis burning just the same now as ever, upon my life.'

All glances went through the window, and nobody noticed that Wildeve disguised a brief, tell-tale look. Far away up the sombre valley of heath, and to the right of Rainbarrow, could indeed be seen the light, small, but steady and persistent as before.

'It was lighted before ours was,' Fairway continued; 'and yet every one in the country round is out afore 'n.'

'Perhaps there's meaning in it!' murmured Christian.

'How meaning?' said Wildeve sharply.

Christian was too scattered to reply, and Timothy helped him.

'He means, sir, that the lonesome dark-eyed creature up there that some say is a witch—ever I should call a fine young woman such a name—is always up to some odd conceit or other; and so perhaps 'tis she.'

'I'd be very glad to ask her in wedlock, if she'd hae me, and take the risk of her wild dark eyes ill-wishing me,' said Grandfer Cante staunchly.

'Don't ye say it, father!' implored Christian.

'Well, be dazed if he who do marry the maid won't hae an uncommon picture for his best parlour,' said Fairway in a liquid tone, placing down the cup of mead at the end of a good pull.

'And a partner as deep as the North Star,' said Sam, taking up the cup and finishing the little that remained.

'Well, really, now I think we must be moving,' said Humphrey, observing the emptiness of the vessel.

'But we'll gie 'em another song?' said Grandfer Cante. 'I'm as full of notes as a bird!'

'Thank you, Grandfer,' said Wildeve. 'But we will not trouble you now. Some other day must do for that—when I have a party.'

'Be jown'd if I don't learn ten new songs for't, or I won't learn a line!' said Grandfer Cattle. 'And you may be sure I won't disappoint ye by biding away, Mr. Wildeve.'

'I quite believe you,' said that gentleman.

All then took their leave, wishing their entertainer long life and happiness as a married man, with recapitulations which occupied some time. Wildeve attended them to the door, beyond which the deep-dyed upward stretch of heath stood awaiting them, an amplitude of darkness reigning from their feet almost to the zenith, where a definite form first became visible in the lowering forehead of Rainbarrow. Diving into the dense obscurity in a line headed by Sam the turf-cutter, they pursued their trackless way home.

When the scratching of the furze against their leggings had faded upon the ear, Wildeve returned to the room where he had left Thomasin and her aunt. The women were gone.

They could only have left the house in one way, by the back window; and this was open.

Wildeve laughed to himself, remained a moment thinking, and idly returned to the front room. Here his glance fell upon a bottle of wine which stood on the mantelpiece. 'Ah—old Dowden!' he murmured; and going to the kitchen door shouted, 'Is anybody here who can take something to old Dowden?'

There was no reply. The room was empty, the lad who acted as his factotum having gone to bed. Wildeve came back, put on his hat, took the bottle, and left the house, turning the key in the door, for there was no guest at the inn to-night. As soon as he was on the road the little bonfire on Mistover Knap again met his eye.

'Still waiting, are you, my lady?' he murmured.

However, he did not proceed that way just then; but leaving the hill to the left of him, he stumbled over a rutted road that brought him to a cottage which, like all other habitations on the heath at this hour, was only saved from being invisible by a faint shine from its bedroom window. This house was the home of Olly Dowden, the besom-maker, and he entered.

The lower room was in darkness; but by feeling his way he found a table, whereon he placed the bottle, and a minute later emerged again upon the heath. He stood and looked north-east at the undying little fire—high up above him, though not so high as Rainbarrow.

We have been told what happens when a woman deliberates; and the epigram is not always terminable with woman, provided that one be in the case, and that a fair one. Wildeve stood, and stood longer, and breathed perplexedly, and then said to himself with resignation, 'Yes—by Heaven, I must go to her, I suppose!'

Instead of turning in the direction of home, he pressed on rapidly by a path under Rainbarrow towards what was evidently a signal light.

VI. THE FIGURE AGAINST THE SKY

WHEN the whole Egdon concourse had left the site of the bonfire to its accustomed loneliness, a closely wrapped female figure approached the barrow from that quarter of the heath in which the little fire lay. Had the reddleman been watching he might have recognized her as the woman who had first stood there so singularly, and vanished at the approach of strangers. She ascended to her old position at the top, where the red coals of the perishing fire greeted her like living eyes in the corpse of day. There she stood still, around her stretching the vast night atmosphere, whose incomplete darkness in comparison with the total darkness of the heath below it might have represented a venial beside a mortal sin.

That she was tall and straight in build, that she was ladylike in her movements, was all that could be learnt of her just now, her form being wrapped in a shawl folded in the old cornerwise fashion, and her head in a large kerchief, a protection not superfluous at this hour and place. Her back was towards the wind, which blew from the north-west; but whether she had avoided that aspect because of the chilly gusts which played about her exceptional position, or because her interest lay in the south-east, did not at first appear.

Her reason for standing so dead still as the pivot of this circle of heath-country was just as obscure. Her extraordinary fixity, her conspicuous loneliness, her heedlessness of night, betokened among other things an utter absence of fear. A tract of country unaltered from that sinister condition which made Cæsar anxious every year to get clear of its glooms before the autumnal equinox, a kind of landscape and weather which leads travellers from the South to describe our island as Homer's Cimmerian land, was not, on the face of it, friendly to women.

It might reasonably have been supposed that she was listening to the wind, which rose somewhat as the night advanced, and laid hold of the attention. The wind, indeed, seemed made for the scene, as the scene seemed made for the hour. Part of its tone was quite special; what was heard there could be heard nowhere else. Gusts in innumerable series followed each other from the north-west, and when each one of them raced past the sound of its progress resolved into three. Treble, tenor, and bass notes were to be found therein. The general ricochet of the whole over pits and prominences had the gravest pitch of the chime. Next there could be heard the baritone buzz of a holly tree. Below these in force, above them in pitch, a dwindled voice strove hard at a husky tune, which was the peculiar local sound alluded to. Thinner and less immediately traceable than the other two, it was far more impressive than either. In it lay what may be called the linguistic peculiarity of the heath; and being audible nowhere on earth off a heath, it afforded a shadow of reason for the woman's tenseness, which continued as unbroken as ever.

Throughout the blowing of these plaintive November winds that note bore a great resemblance to the ruins of human song which remain to the throat of fourscore and ten. It was a worn whisper, dry and papery, and it brushed so distinctly across the ear that, by the accustomed, the material minutæ in which it originated could be realized as by touch. It was the united products of infinitesimal vegetable causes, and these were neither stems, leaves, fruit, blades, prickles, lichen, nor moss.

They were the mummied heath-bells of the past summer, originally tender and purple, now washed colourless by Michaelmas rains, and dried to dead skins by October suns. So low was an individual sound from these that a combination of hundreds only just emerged from silence, and the myriads of the whole declivity reached the woman's ear but as a shrivelled and intermittent recitative. Yet scarcely a single accent among the many afloat to-night could have such power to impress a listener with thoughts of its origin. One inwardly saw the infinity of those combined multitudes; and perceived that each of the tiny trumpets was seized on, entered, scoured and emerged from by the wind as thoroughly as if it were as vast as a crater.

'The spirit moved them.' A meaning of the phrase forced itself upon the attention; and an emotional listener's fetichistic mood might have ended in one of more advanced quality. It was not, after all, that the left-hand expanse of old blooms spoke, or the right-hand, or those of the slope in front; but it was the single person of something else speaking through each in turn.

Suddenly, on the barrow, there mingled with all this wild rhetoric of night a sound which modulated so naturally into the rest that its beginning and ending were hardly to be distinguished. The bluffs, and the bushes, and the heather-bells had broken silence; at last, so did the woman; and her articulation was but as another phrase of the same discourse as theirs. Thrown out on the winds it became twined in with them, and with them it flew away.

What she uttered was a lengthened sighing, apparently at something in her mind which had led to her presence here. There was a spasmodic abandonment about it as if, in allowing herself to utter the sound, the woman's brain had authorized what it could not regulate. One point was evident in this; that she had been existing in a suppressed state, and not in one of langour, or stagnation.

Far away down the valley the faint shine from the window of the inn still lasted on; and a few additional moments proved that the window, or what was within it, had more to do with the woman's sigh than had either her own actions or the scene immediately around. She lifted her left hand, which held a closed telescope. This she rapidly extended, as if she were well accustomed to the operation, and raising it to her eye directed it towards the light beaming from the inn.

The handkerchief which had hooded her head was now a little thrown back, her face being somewhat elevated. A profile was visible against the dull monochrome of cloud around her; and it was as though side shadows from the features of Sappho and Mrs. Siddons had converged upwards from

the tomb to form an image like neither but suggesting both. This, however, was mere superficiality. In respect of character a face may make certain admissions by its outline; but it fully confesses only in its changes. So much is this the case that what is called the play of the features often helps more in understanding a man or woman than the earnest labours of all the other members together. Thus the night revealed little of her whose form it was embracing, for the mobile parts of her countenance could not be seen.

At last she gave up her spying attitude, closed the telescope, and turned to the decaying embers. From these no appreciable beams now radiated, except when a more than usually smart gust brushed over their faces and raised a fitful glow which came and went like the blush of a girl. She stooped over the silent circle, and selecting from the brands a piece of stick which bore the largest live coal at its end, brought it to where she had been standing before.

She held the brand to the ground, blowing the red coal with her mouth at the same time; till it faintly illuminated the sod, and revealed a small object, which turned out to be an hour-glass, though she wore a watch. She blew long enough to show that the sand had all slipped through.

'Ah!' she said, as if surprised.

The light raised by her breath had been very fitful, and a momentary irradiation of flesh was all that it had disclosed of her face. That consisted of two matchless lips and a cheek only, her head being still enveloped. She threw away the stick, took the glass in her hand, the telescope under her arm, and moved on.

Along the ridge ran a faint foot-track, which the lady followed. Those who knew it well called it a path; and, while a mere visitor would have passed it unnoticed even by day, the regular haunters of the heath were at no loss for it at midnight. The whole secret of following these incipient paths, when there was not light enough in the atmosphere to show a turnpike-road, lay in the development of the sense of touch in the feet, which comes with years of night-rambling in little-trodden spots. To a walker practised in such places a difference between impact on maiden herbage, and on the crippled stalks of a slight footway, is perceptible through the thickest boot or shoe.

The solitary figure who walked this beat took no notice of the windy tune still played on the dead heath-bells. She did not turn her head to look at a group of dark creatures further on, who fled from her presence as she skirted a ravine where they fed. They were about a score of the small wild ponies known as heath-croppers. They roamed at large on the undulations of Egdon, but in numbers too few to detract much from the solitude.

The pedestrian noticed nothing just now, and a clue to her abstraction was afforded by a trivial incident. A bramble caught hold of her skirt, and checked her progress. Instead of putting it off and hastening along, she yielded herself up to the pull, and stood passively still. When she began to extricate herself it was by turning round and round, and so unwinding the prickly switch. She was in a desponding reverie.

Her course was in the direction of the small undying fire which had drawn the attention of the men on Rainbarrow and of Wildeve in the valley below. A faint illumination from its rays began to glow upon her face, and the fire soon revealed itself to be lit, not on the level ground, but on a silent corner or redan of earth, at the junction of two converging bank fences. Outside was a ditch, dry except immediately under the fire, where there was a large pool, bearded all round by heather and rushes. In the smooth water of the pool the fire appeared upside down.

The banks meeting behind were bare of a hedge, save such as was formed by disconnected tufts of furze, standing upon stems along the top, like impaled heads above a city wall. A white mast, fitted up with spars and other nautical tackle, could be seen rising against the dark clouds whenever the flames played brightly enough to reach it. Altogether the scene had much the appearance of a fortification upon which had been kindled a beacon fire.

Nobody was visible; but ever and anon a whitish something moved above the bank from behind, and vanished again. This was a small human hand, in the act of lifting pieces of fuel into the fire; but for all that could be seen the hand, like that which troubled Belshazzar, was there alone. Occasionally an ember rolled off the bank, and dropped with a hiss into the pool.

At one side of the pool rough steps built of clods enabled any one who wished to do so to mount the bank; which the woman did. Within was a paddock in an uncultivated state, though bearing evidence of having once been tilled; but the heath and fern had insidiously crept in, and were reasserting their old supremacy. Further ahead were dimly visible an irregular dwelling-house, garden, and outbuildings, backed by a clump of firs.

The young lady—for youth had revealed its presence in her buoyant bound up the bank—walked along the top instead of descending inside, and came to the corner where the fire was burning. One reason for the permanence of the blaze was now manifest: the fuel consisted of hard pieces of wood, cleft and sawn—the knotty boles of old thorn trees which grew in twos and threes about the hillsides. A yet unconsumed pile of these lay in the inner angle of the bank; and from this corner the upturned face of a little boy greeted her eyes. He was dilatorily throwing up a piece of wood into the fire every now and then, a business which seemed to have engaged him a considerable part of the evening, for his face was somewhat weary.

‘I am glad you have come, Miss Eustacia,’ he said, with a sigh of relief. ‘I don’t like biding by myself.’

‘Nonsense. I have only been a little way for a walk. I have been gone only twenty minutes.’

‘It seemed long,’ murmured the sad boy. ‘And you have been so many times.’

‘Why, I thought you would be pleased to have a bonfire. Are you not much obliged to me for making you one?’

‘Yes; but there’s nobody here to play wi’ me.’

‘I suppose nobody has come while I’ve been away?’

'Nobody except your grandfather: he looked out of doors once for 'ee. I told him you were walking round upon the hill to look at the other bonfires.'

'A good boy.'

'I think I hear him coming again, miss.'

An old man came into the remoter light of the fire from the direction of the homestead. He was the same who had overtaken the reddleman on the road that afternoon. He looked wistfully to the top of the bank at the woman who stood there, and his teeth, which were quite unimpaired, showed like Parian from his parted lips.

'When are you coming indoors, Eustacia?' he asked. 'Tis almost bedtime. I've been home these two hours, and am tired out. Surely 'tis somewhat childish of you to stay out playing at bonfires so long, and wasting such fuel. My precious thorn roots, the rarest of all firing, that I laid by on purpose for Christmas—you have burnt 'em nearly all!'

'I promised Johnny a bonfire, and it pleases him not to let it go out just yet,' said Eustacia, in a way which told at once that she was absolute queen here. 'Grandfather, you go in to bed. I shall follow you soon. You like the fire, don't you, Johnny?'

The boy looked up doubtfully at her and murmured, 'I don't think I want it any longer.'

Her grandfather had turned back again, and did not hear the boy's reply. As soon as the white-haired man had vanished she said in a tone of pique to the child, 'Ungrateful little boy, how can you contradict me? Never shall you have a bonfire again unless you keep it up now. Come, tell me you like to do things for me, and don't deny it.'

The repressed child said, 'Yes, I do, miss,' and continued to stir the fire perfunctorily.

'Stay a little longer and I will give you a crooked sixpence,' said Eustacia, more gently. 'Put in one piece of wood every two or three minutes, but not too much at once. I am going to walk along the ridge a little longer, but I shall keep on coming to you. And if you hear a frog jump into the pond with a flounce, like a stone thrown in, be sure you run and tell me, because it is a sign of rain.'

'Yes, Eustacia.'

'Miss Vye, sir.'

'Miss Vy—stacia.'

'That will do. Now put in one stick more.'

The little slave went on feeding the fire as before. He seemed a mere automaton, galvanized into moving and speaking by the wayward Eustacia's will. He might have been the brass statue which Albertus Magnus is said to have animated just so far as to make it chatter, and move, and be his servant.

Before going on her walk again the young girl stood still on the bank for a few instants and listened. It was to the full as lonely a place as Rainbarrow, though at rather a lower level; and it was more sheltered from wind

and weather on account of the few firs to the north. The bank which enclosed the homestead, and protected it from the lawless state of the world without, was formed of thick square clods, dug from the ditch on the outside, and built up with a slight batter or incline, which forms no slight defence where hedges will not grow because of the wind and the wilderness, and where wall materials are unattainable. Otherwise the situation was quite open, commanding the whole length of the valley which reached to the river behind Wildeve's house. High above this to the right, and much nearer thitherward than the Quiet Woman Inn, the blurred contour of Rainbarrow obstructed the sky.

After her attentive survey of the wild slopes and hollow ravines a gesture of impatience escaped Eustacia. She vented petulant words every now and then; but there were sighs between her words, and sudden listenings between her sighs. Descending from her perch she again sauntered off towards Rainbarrow, though this time she did not go the whole way.

Twice she reappeared at intervals of a few minutes, and each time she said—

'Not any flounce into the pond yet, little man?'

'No, Miss Eustacia,' the child replied.

'Well,' she said at last, 'I shall soon be going in; and then I will give you the crooked sixpence, and let you go home.'

'Thank'ee Miss Eustacia,' said the tired stoker, breathing more easily. And Eustacia again strolled away from the fire, but this time not towards Rainbarrow. She skirted the bank and went round to the wicket before the house, where she stood motionless looking at the scene.

Fifty yards off rose the corner of the two converging banks, with the fire upon it: within the bank, lifting up to the fire one stick at a time, just as before, the figure of the little child. She idly watched him as he occasionally climbed up in the nook of the bank and stood beside the brands. The wind blew the smoke, and the child's hair, and the corner of his pinafore, all in the same direction: the breeze died, and the pinafore and hair lay still, and the smoke went up straight.

While Eustacia looked on from this distance the boy's form visibly started; he slid down the bank and ran across towards the white gate.

'Well?' said Eustacia.

'A hop-frog have jumped into the pond. Yes, I heard 'en!'

'Then it is going to rain, and you had better go home. You will not be afraid?' She spoke hurriedly, as if her heart had leapt into her throat at the boy's words.

'No, because I shall hae the crooked sixpence.'

'Yes, here it is. Now run as fast as you can—not that way—through the garden here. No other boy in the heath has had such a bonfire as yours.'

The boy, who clearly had had too much of a good thing, marched away into the shadows with alacrity. When he was gone Eustacia, leaving her

telescope and hour-glass by the gate, brushed forward from the wicket towards the angle of the bank, under the fire.

Here, screened by the outwork, she waited. In a few moments a splash was audible from the pond outside. Had the child been there he would have said that a second frog had jumped in; but by most people the sound would have been likened to the fall of a stone into the water. Eustacia stepped upon the bank.

'Yes?' she said, and held her breath.

Thereupon the contour of a man became dimly visible against the low-reaching sky over the valley, beyond the outer margin of the pool. He came round it and leapt upon the bank beside her. A low laugh escaped her—the third utterance which the girl had indulged in to-night. The first, when she stood upon Rainbarrow, had expressed anxiety; the second, on the ridge, had expressed impatience; the present was one of triumphant pleasure. She let her joyous eyes rest upon him without speaking, as upon some wondrous thing she had created out of chaos.

'I have come,' said the man, who was Wildeve. 'You give me no peace. Why do you not leave me alone? I have seen your bonfire all the evening.' The words were not without emotion, and retained their level tone as if by a careful equipoise between imminent extremes.

At this unexpectedly repressing manner in her lover the girl seemed to repress herself also. 'Of course you have seen my fire,' she answered with languid calmness, artificially maintained. 'Why shouldn't I have a bonfire on the Fifth of November, like other denizens of the heath?'

'I knew it was meant for me.'

'How did you know it? I have had no word with you since you—you chose her, and walked about with her, and deserted me entirely, as if I had never been yours body and soul so irretrievably!'

'Eustacia! could I forget that last autumn at this same day of the month and at this same place you lighted exactly such a fire as a signal for me to come and see you? Why should there have been a bonfire again by Captain Vye's house if not for the same purpose?'

'Yes, yes—I own it,' she cried under her breath, with a drowsy fervour of manner and tone which was quite peculiar to her. 'Don't begin speaking to me as you did, Damon; you will drive me to say words I would not wish to say to you. I had given you up, and resolved not to think of you any more; and then I heard the news, and I came out and got the fire ready because I thought that you had been faithful to me.'

'What have you heard to make you think that?' said Wildeve, astonished.

'That you did not marry her!' she murmured exultingly. 'And I knew it was because you loved me best, and couldn't do it. . . . Damon, you have been cruel to me to go away, and I have said I would never forgive you. I do not think I can forgive you entirely, even now—it is too much for a woman of any spirit to quite overlook.'

'If I had known you wished to call me up here only to reproach me, I wouldn't have come.'

'But I don't mind it, and I do forgive you now that you have not married her, and have come back to me!'

'Who told you that I had not married her?'

'My grandfather. He took a long walk to-day, and as he was coming home he overtook some person who told him of a broken-off wedding: he thought it might be yours; and I knew it was.'

'Does anybody else know?'

'I suppose not. Now, Damon, do you see why I lit my signal fire? You did not think I would have lit it if I had imagined you to have become the husband of this woman. It is insulting my pride to suppose that.'

Wildevé was silent: it was evident that he had supposed as much.

'Did you indeed think I believed you were married?' she again demanded earnestly. 'Then you wronged me; and upon my life and heart I can hardly bear to recognize that you have such ill thoughts of me! Damon, you are not worthy of me: I see it, and yet I love you. Never mind. let it go—I must bear your mean opinion as best I may. . . . It is true, is it not,' she added, with ill-concealed anxiety, on his making no demonstration, 'that you could not bring yourself to give me up, and are still going to love me best of all?'

'Yes; or why should I have come?' he said touchily. 'Not that fidelity will be any great merit in me after your kind speech about my unworthiness, which should have been said by myself if by anybody, and comes with an ill grace from you. However, the curse of inflammability is upon me, and I must live under it, and take any snub from a woman. It has brought me down from engineering to innkeeping: what lower stage it has in store for me I have yet to learn.' He continued to look upon her gloomily.

She seized the moment, and throwing back the shawl so that the firelight shone full upon her face and throat, said with a smile, 'Have you seen anything better than that in your travels?'

Eustacia was not one to commit herself to such a position without good ground. He said quietly, 'No.'

'Not even on the shoulders of Thomasin?'

'Thomasin is a pleasing and innocent woman.'

'That's nothing to do with it,' she cried with quick passionateness. 'We will leave her out; there are only you and me now to think of.' After a long look at him she resumed with the old quiescent warmth: 'Must I go on weakly confessing to you things a woman ought to conceal; and own that no words can express how gloomy I have been because of that dreadful belief I held till two hours ago—that you had quite deserted me?'

'I am sorry I caused you that pain.'

'But perhaps it is not wholly because of you that I get gloomy,' she archly added. 'It is in my nature to feel like that. It was born in my blood, I suppose.'

'Hypochondriasis.'

'Or else it was coming into this wild heath. I was happy enough at Budmouth. O the times, O the days at Budmouth! But Egdon will be brighter again now.'

'I hope it will,' said Wildeve moodily. 'Do you know the consequence of this recall to me, my old darling? I shall come to see you again as before, at Rainbarrow.'

'Of course you will.'

'And yet I declare that until I got here to-night I intended, after this one good-bye, never to meet you again.'

'I don't thank you for that,' she said, turning away, while indignation spread through her like subterranean heat. 'You may come again to Rainbarrow if you like, but you won't see me; and you may call, but I shall not listen; and you may tempt me, but I won't give myself to you any more.'

'You have said as much before, sweet; but such natures as yours don't so easily adhere to their words. Neither, for the matter of that, do such natures as mine.'

'This is the pleasure I have won by my trouble,' she whispered bitterly. 'Why did I try to recall you? Damon, a strange warring takes place in my mind occasionally. I think when I become calm after your woundings, "Do I embrace a cloud of common fog after all?" You are a chameleon, and now you are at your worst colour. Go home, or I shall hate you!'

He looked absently towards Rainbarrow while one might have counted twenty, and said, as if he did not much mind all this, 'Yes, I will go home. Do you mean to see me again?'

'If you own to me that the wedding is broken off because you love me best.'

'I don't think it would be good policy,' said Wildeve, smiling. 'You would get to know the extent of your power too clearly.'

'But tell me!'

'You know.'

'Where is she now?'

'I don't know. I prefer not to speak of her to you. I have not yet married her: I have come in obedience to your call. That is enough.'

'I merely lit that fire because I was dull, and thought I would get a little excitement by calling you up and triumphing over you as the Witch of Endor called up Samuel. I determined you should come; and you have come! I have shown my power. A mile and half hither, and a mile and half back again to your home—three miles in the dark for me. Have I not shown my power?'

He shook his head at her. 'I know you too well, my Eustacia; I know you too well. There isn't a note in you which I don't know; and that hot little bosom couldn't play such a cold-blooded trick to save its life. I saw a woman on Rainbarrow at dusk looking down towards my house. I think I drew out you before you drew out me.'

The revived embers of an old passion glowed clearly in Wildeve now; and he leant forward as if about to put his face towards her cheek.

'O no,' she said, intractably moving to the other side of the decayed fire. 'What did you mean by that?'

'Perhaps I may kiss your hand?'

'No, you may not.'

'Then I may shake your hand?'

'No.'

'Then I wish you good-night without caring for either. Good-bye, good-bye.'

She returned no answer, and with the bow of a dancing-master he vanished on the other side of the pool as he had come.

Eustacia sighed: it was no fragile maiden sigh, but a sigh which shook her like a shiver. Whenever a flash of reason darted like an electric light upon her lover—as it sometimes would—and showed his imperfections, she shivered thus. But it was over in a second, and she loved on. She knew that he trifled with her; but she loved on. She scattered the half-burnt brands, went indoors immediately, and up to her bedroom without a light. Amid the rustles which denoted her to be undressing in the darkness other heavy breaths frequently came; and the same kind of shudder occasionally moved through her when, ten minutes later, she lay on her bed asleep.

VII. QUEEN OF NIGHT

EUSTACIA VYE was the raw material of a divinity. On Olympus she would have done well with a little preparation. She had the passions and instincts which made a model goddess, that is, those which make not quite a model woman. Had it been possible for the earth and mankind to be entirely in her grasp for a while, had she handled the distaff, the spindle, and the shears at her own free will, few in the world would have noticed the change of government. There would have been the same inequality of lot, the same heaping up of favours here, of contumely there, the same generosity before justice, the same perpetual dilemmas, the same captious alternation of caresses and blows that we endure now.

She was in person full-limbed and somewhat heavy; without ruddiness, as without pallor; and soft to the touch as a cloud. To see her hair was to fancy that a whole winter did not contain darkness enough to form its shadow: it closed over her forehead like nightfall extinguishing the western glow.

Her nerves extended into those tresses, and her temper could always be softened by stroking them down. When her hair was brushed she would instantly sink into stillness and look like the Sphinx. If, in passing under one of the Egdon banks, any of its thick skeins were caught, as they sometimes

were, by a prickly tuft of the large *Ulex Europæus*—which will act as a sort of hairbrush—she would go back a few steps, and pass against it a second time.

She had Pagan eyes, full of nocturnal mysteries. Their light, as it came and went, and came again, was partially hampered by their oppressive lids and lashes; and of these the under lid was much fuller than it usually is with English women. This enabled her to indulge in reverie without seeming to do so: she might have been believed capable of sleeping without closing them up. Assuming that the souls of men and women were visible essences, you could fancy the colour of Eustacia's soul to be flame-like. The sparks from it that rose into her dark pupils gave the same impression.

The mouth seemed formed less to speak than to quiver, less to quiver than to kiss. Some might have added, less to kiss than to curl. Viewed sideways, the closing-line of her lips formed, with almost geometric precision, the curve so well known in the arts of design as the *cima-recta*, or ogee. The sight of such a flexible bend as that on grim Egdon was quite an apparition. It was felt at once that that mouth did not come over from Sleswig with a band of Saxon pirates whose lips met like the two halves of a muffin. One had fancied that such lip-curves were mostly lurking underground in the South as fragments of forgotten marbles. So fine were the lines of her lips that, though full, each corner of her mouth was as clearly cut as the point of a spear. This keenness of corner was only blunted when she was given over to sudden fits of gloom, one of the phases of the night-side of sentiment which she knew too well for her years.

Her presence brought memories of such things as Bourbon roses, rubies, and tropical midnights; her moods recalled lotus-eaters and the march in 'Athalie'; her motions, the ebb and flow of the sea; her voice, the viola. In a dim light, and with a slight rearrangement of her hair, her general figure might have stood for that of either of the higher female deities. The new moon behind her head, an old helmet upon it, a diadem of accidental dew-drops round her brow, would have been adjuncts sufficient to strike the note of Artemis, Athena, or Hera respectively, with as close an approximation to the antique as that which passes muster on many respected canvases.

But celestial imperiousness, love, wrath, and fervour had proved to be somewhat thrown away on netherward Egdon. Her power was limited, and the consciousness of this limitation had biassed her development. Egdon was her Hades, and since coming there she had imbibed much of what was dark in its tone, though inwardly and eternally unreconciled thereto. Her appearance accorded well with this smouldering rebelliousness, and the shady splendour of her beauty was the real surface of the sad and stifled warmth within her. A true Tartarean dignity sat upon her brow, and not factitiously or with marks of constraint, for it had grown in her with years.

Across the upper part of her head she wore a thin fillet of black velvet, restraining the luxuriance of her shady hair, in a way which added much to this class of majesty by irregularly clouding her forehead. 'Nothing can embellish a beautiful face more than a narrow band drawn over the brow,' says

Richter. Some of the neighbouring girls wore coloured ribbon for the same purpose, and sported metallic ornaments elsewhere; but if any one suggested coloured ribbon and metallic ornaments to Eustacia Vye she laughed and went on.

Why did a woman of this sort live on Egdon Heath? Budmouth was her native place, a fashionable seaside resort at that date. She was the daughter of the bandmaster of a regiment which had been quartered there—a Corfiote by birth, and a fine musician—who met his future wife during her trip thither with her father the captain, a man of good family. The marriage was scarcely in accord with the old man's wishes, for the bandmaster's pockets were as light as his occupation. But the musician did his best; adopted his wife's name, made England permanently his home, took great trouble with his child's education, the expenses of which were defrayed by the grandfather, and throve as the chief local musician till her mother's death, when he left off thriving, drank, and died also. The girl was left to the care of her grandfather, who, since three of his ribs became broken in a shipwreck, had lived in this airy perch on Egdon, a spot which had taken his fancy because the house was to be had for next to nothing, and because a remote blue tinge on the horizon between the hills, visible from the cottage door, was traditionally believed to be the English Channel. She hated the change; she felt like one banished; but here she was forced to abide.

Thus it happened that in Eustacia's brain were juxtaposed the strangest assortment of ideas, from old time and from new. There was no middle distance in her perspective: romantic recollections of sunny afternoons on an esplanade, with military bands, officers, and gallants around, stood like gilded letters upon the dark tablet of surrounding Egdon. Every bizarre effect that could result from the random intertwining of watering-place glitter with the grand solemnity of a heath, was to be found in her. Seeing nothing of human life now, she imagined all the more of what she had seen.

Where did her dignity come from? By a latent vein from Alcinous' line, her father hailing from Phæacia's isle?—or from Fitzalan and De Vere, her maternal grandfather having had a cousin in the peerage? Perhaps it was the gift to Heaven—a happy convergence of natural laws. Among other things opportunity had of late years been denied her of learning to be undignified, for she lived lonely. Isolation on a heath renders vulgarity well-nigh impossible. It would have been as easy for the heath-ponies, bats, and snakes to be vulgar as for her. A narrow life in Budmouth might have completely demeaned her.

The only way to look queenly without realms or hearts to queen it over is to look as if you had lost them; and Eustacia did that to a triumph. In the captain's cottage she could suggest mansions she had never seen. Perhaps that was because she frequented a vaster mansion than any of them, the open hills. Like the summer condition of the place around her, she was an embodiment of the phrase 'a populous solitude'—apparently so listless, void, and quiet, she was really busy and full.

To be loved to madness—such was her great desire. Love was to her the one cordial which could drive away the eating loneliness of her days. And she seemed to long for the abstraction called passionate love more than for any particular lover.

She could show a most reproachful look at times, but it was directed less against human beings than against certain creatures of her mind, the chief of these being Destiny, through whose interference she dimly fancied it arose that love alighted only on gliding youth—that any love she might win would sink simultaneously with the sand in the glass. She thought of it with an ever-growing consciousness of cruelty, which tended to breed actions of reckless unconventionality, framed to snatch a year's, a week's, even an hour's passion from anywhere while it could be won. Through want of it she had sung without being merry, possessed without enjoying, outshone without triumphing. Her loneliness deepened her desire. On Egdon, coldest and meanest kisses were at famine prices; and where was a mouth matching hers to be found?

Fidelity in love for fidelity's sake had less attraction for her than for most women: fidelity because of love's grip had much. A blaze of love, and extinction, was better than a lantern glimmer of the same which should last long years. On this head she knew by prevision what most women learn only by experience: she had mentally walked round love, told the towers thereof, considered its palaces; and concluded that love was but a doleful joy. Yet she desired it, as one in a desert would be thankful for brackish water.

She often repeated her prayers; not at particular times, but, like the unaffectedly devout, when she desired to pray. Her prayer was always spontaneous, and often ran thus, 'O deliver my heart from this fearful gloom and loneliness: send me great love from somewhere, else I shall die.'

Her high gods were William the Conqueror, Strafford, and Napoleon Buonaparte, as they had appeared in the Lady's History used at the establishment in which she was educated. Had she been a mother she would have christened her boys such names as Saul or Sisera in preference to Jacob or David, neither of whom she admired. At school she had used to side with the Philistines in several battles, and had wondered if Pontius Pilate were as handsome as he was frank and fair.

Thus she was a girl of some forwardness of mind, indeed, weighed in relation to her situation among the very rereward of thinkers, very original. Her instincts towards social nonconformity were at the root of this. In the matters of holidays, her mood was that of horses who, when turned out to grass, enjoy looking upon their kind at work on the highway. She only valued rest to herself when it came in the midst of other people's labour. Hence she hated Sundays when all was at rest, and often said they would be the death of her. To see the heathmen in their Sunday condition, that is, with their hands in their pockets, their boots newly oiled, and not laced up (a particularly Sunday sign), walking leisurely among the turves and furze-faggots they had cut during the week, and kicking them critically as if their

use were unknown, was a fearful heaviness to her. To relieve the tedium of this untimely day she would overhaul the cupboards containing her grandfather's old charts and other rubbish, humming Saturday-night ballads of the country people the while. But on Saturday nights she would frequently sing a psalm, and it was always on a week-day that she read the Bible, that she might be unoppressed with a sense of doing her duty.

Such views of life were to some extent the natural begettings of her situation upon her nature. To dwell on a heath without studying its meanings was like wedding a foreigner without learning his tongue. The subtle beauties of the heath were lost to Eustacia; she only caught its vapours. An environment which would have made a contented woman a poet, a suffering woman a devotee, a pious woman a psalmist, even a giddy woman thoughtful, made a rebellious woman saturnine.

Eustacia had got beyond the vision of some marriage of inexpressible glory; yet, though her emotions were in full vigour, she cared for no meaner union. Thus we see her in a strange state of isolation. To have lost the godlike conceit that we may do what we will, and not to have acquired a homely zest for doing what we can, shows a grandeur of temper which cannot be objected to in the abstract, for it denotes a mind that, though disappointed, forswears compromise. But, if congenial to philosophy, it is apt to be dangerous to the commonwealth. In a world where doing means marrying, and the commonwealth is one of hearts and hands, the same peril attends the condition.

And so we see our Eustacia—for at times she was not altogether unlovable—arriving at that stage of enlightenment which feels that nothing is worth while, and filling up the spare hours of her existence by idealizing Wildeve for want of a better object. This was the sole reason of his ascendancy: she knew it herself. At moments her pride rebelled against her passion for him, and she even had longed to be free. But there was only one circumstance which could dislodge him, and that was the advent of a greater man.

For the rest, she suffered much from depression of spirits, and took slow walks to recover them, in which she carried her grandfather's telescope and her grandmother's hour-glass—the latter because of a peculiar pleasure she derived from watching a material representation of time's gradual glide away. She seldom schemed, but when she did scheme, her plans showed rather the comprehensive strategy of a general than the small arts called womanish, though she could utter oracles of Delphian ambiguity when she did not choose to be direct. In heaven she will probably sit between the Héloïses and the Cleopatras.

VIII. THOSE WHO ARE FOUND WHERE THERE
IS SAID TO BE NOBODY

As soon as the sad little boy had withdrawn from the fire he clasped the money tight in the palm of his hand, as if thereby to fortify his courage, and began to run. There was really little danger in allowing a child to go home alone on this part of Egdon Heath. The distance to the boy's house was not more than three-eighths of a mile, his father's cottage, and one other a few yards further on, forming part of the small hamlet of Mist-over Knap: the third and only remaining house was that of Captain Vye and Eustacia, which stood quite away from the small cottages, and was the loneliest of lonely houses on these thinly populated slopes.

He ran until he was out of breath, and then, becoming more courageous, walked leisurely along, singing in an old voice a little song about a sailor-boy and a fair one, and bright gold in store. In the middle of this the child stopped: from a pit under the hill ahead of him shone a light, whence proceeded a cloud of floating dust and a smacking noise.

Only unusual sights and sounds frightened the boy. The shrivelled voice of the heath did not alarm him, for that was familiar. The thorn-bushes which arose in his path from time to time were less satisfactory, for they whistled gloomily, and had a ghastly habit after dark of putting on the shapes of jumping madmen, sprawling giants, and hideous cripples. Lights were not uncommon this evening, but the nature of all of them was different from this. Discretion rather than terror prompted the boy to turn back instead of passing the light, with a view of asking Miss Eustacia Vye to let her servant accompany him home.

When the boy had reascended to the top of the valley he found the fire to be still burning on the bank, though lower than before. Beside it, instead of Eustacia's solitary form, he saw two persons, the second being a man. The boy crept along under the bank to ascertain from the nature of the proceedings if it would be prudent to interrupt so splendid a creature as Miss Eustacia on his poor trivial account.

After listening under the bank for some minutes to the talk he turned in a perplexed and doubting manner and began to withdraw as silently as he had come. That he did not, upon the whole, think it advisable to interrupt her conversation with Wildeve, without being prepared to bear the whole weight of her displeasure, was obvious.

Here was a Scyllæo-Charybdean position for a poor boy. Pausing when again safe from discovery he finally decided to face the pit phenomenon as the lesser evil. With a heavy sigh he retraced the slope, and followed the path he had followed before.

The light had gone, the rising dust had disappeared—he hoped for ever.

He marched resolutely along, and found nothing to alarm him till, coming within a few yards of the sandpit, he heard a slight noise in front, which led him to halt. The halt was but momentary, for the noise resolved itself into the steady bites of two animals grazing.

'Two he'th-croppers down here,' he said aloud. 'I have never known 'em come down so far afore.'

The animals were in the direct line of his path, but that the child thought little of; he had played round the fetlocks of horses from his infancy. On coming nearer, however, the boy was somewhat surprised to find that the little creatures did not run off, and that each wore a clog, to prevent his going astray; this signified that they had been broken in. He could now see the interior of the pit, which, being in the side of the hill, had a level entrance. In the innermost corner the square outline of a van appeared, with its back towards him. A light came from the interior, and threw a moving shadow upon the vertical face of gravel at the further side of the pit into which the vehicle faced.

The child assumed that this was the cart of a gipsy, and his dread of those wanderers reached but to that mild pitch which titillates rather than pains. Only a few inches of mud wall kept him and his family from being gipsies themselves. He skirted the gravel-pit at a respectful distance, ascending the slope, and came forward upon the brow, in order to look into the open door of the van and see the original of the shadow.

The picture alarmed the boy. By a little stove inside the van sat a figure red from head to heels—the man who had been Thomasin's friend. He was darning a stocking, which was red like the rest of him. Moreover, as he darned he smoked a pipe, the stem and bowl of which were red also.

At this moment one of the heath-croppers feeding in the outer shadows was audibly shaking off the clog attached to its foot. Aroused by the sound, the reddleman laid down his stocking, lit a lantern which hung beside him, and came out from the van. In sticking up the candle he lifted the lantern to his face, and the light shone into the whites of his eyes and upon his ivory teeth, which, in contrast with the red surrounding, lent him a startling aspect enough to the gaze of a juvenile. The boy knew too well for his peace of mind upon whose lair he had lighted. Uglier persons than gipsies were known to cross Egdon at times, and a reddleman was one of them.

'How I wish 'twas only a gipsy!' he murmured.

The man was by this time coming back from the horses. In his fear of being seen the boy rendered detection certain by nervous motion. The heather and peat stratum overhung the brow of the pit in mats, hiding the actual verge. The boy had stepped beyond the solid ground; the heather now gave way, and down he rolled over the scarp of grey sand to the very foot of the man.

The red man opened the lantern and turned it upon the figure of the prostrate boy.

'Who be ye?' he said.

'Johnny Nunsuch, master!'

'What were you doing up there?'

'I don't know.'

'Watching me, I suppose?'

'Yes, master.'

'What did you watch me for?'

'Because I was coming home from Miss Vye's bonfire.'

'Beest hurt?'

'No.'

'Why, yes, you be: your hand is bleeding. Come under my tilt and let me tie it up.'

'Please let me look for my sixpence.'

'How did you come by that?'

'Miss Vye gied it to me for keeping up her bonfire.'

The sixpence was found, and the man went to the van, the boy behind, almost holding his breath.

The man took a piece of rag from a satchel containing sewing materials, tore off a strip, which, like everything else, was tinged red, and proceeded to bind up the wound.

'My eyes have got foggy-like—please may I sit down, master?' said the boy.

'To be sure, poor chap. 'Tis enough to make you feel fainty. Sit on that bundle.'

The man finished tying up the gash, and the boy said, 'I think I'll go home now, master.'

'You are rather afraid of me. Do you know what I be?'

The child surveyed his vermilion figure up and down with much misgiving, and finally said, 'Yes.'

'Well, what?'

'The reddleman!' he faltered.

'Yes, that's what I be. Though there's more than one. You little children think there's only one cuckoo, one fox, one giant, one devil, and one reddleman, when there's lots of us all.'

'Is there? You won't carry me off in your bags, will ye, master? 'Tis said that the reddleman will sometimes.'

'Nonsense. All that reddlemen do is sell reddle. You see all these bags at the back of my cart? They are not full of little boys—only full of red stuff.'

'Was you born a reddleman?'

'No, I took to it. I should be as white as you if I were to give up the trade—that is, I should be white in time—perhaps six months: not at first, because 'tis grow'd into my skin and won't wash out. Now, you'll never be afraid of a reddleman again, will ye?'

'No, never. Willy Orchard said he seed a red ghost here t'other day—perhaps that was you?'

'I was here t'other day.'

'Were you making that dusty light I saw by now?'

'O yes: I was beating out some bags. And have you had a good bonfire up there? I saw the light. Why did Miss Vye want a bonfire so bad that she should give you sixpence to keep it up?'

'I don't know. I was tired, but she made me bide and keep up the fire just the same, while she kept going up across Rainbarrow way.'

'And how long did that last?'

'Until a hopfrog jumped into the pond.'

The reddleman suddenly ceased to talk idly. 'A hopfrog?' he inquired. 'Hopfrogs don't jump into ponds this time of year.'

'They do, for I heard one.'

'Certain-sure?'

'Yes. She told me afore that I should hear'n; and so I did. They say she's clever and deep, and perhaps she charmed 'en to come.'

'And what then?'

'Then I came down here, and I was afeard, and I went back; but I didn't like to speak to her, because of the gentleman, and I came on here again.'

'A gentleman—ah! What did she say to him, my man?'

'Told him she supposed he had not married the other woman because he liked his old sweetheart best; and things like that.'

'What did the gentleman say to her, my sonny?'

'He only said he did like her best, and how he was coming to see her again under Rainbarrow o' nights.'

'Hal' cried the reddleman, slapping his hand against the side of his van so that the whole fabric shook under the blow. 'That's the secret o't!'

The little boy jumped clean from the stool.

'My man, don't you be afraid,' said the dealer in red, suddenly becoming gentle. 'I forgot you were here. That's only a curious way reddlemen have of going mad for a moment; but they don't hurt anybody. And what did the lady say then?'

'I can't mind. Please, Master Reddleman, may I go home-along now?'

'Ay, to be sure you may. I'll go a bit of ways with you.'

He conducted the boy out of the gravel-pit and into the path leading to his mother's cottage. When the little figure had vanished in the darkness the reddleman returned, resumed his seat by the fire, and proceeded to darn again.

IX. LOVE LEADS A SHREWD MAN INTO STRATEGY

REDDLEMEN of the old school are now but seldom seen. Since the introduction of railways Wessex farmers have managed to do without these Mephistophelian visitants, and the bright pigment so largely used by shepherds in preparing sheep for the fair is obtained by other routes. Even those who yet survive are losing the poetry of existence which characterized them when the pursuit of the trade meant periodical journeys to the pit

whence the material was dug, a regular camping out from month to month, except in the depth of winter, a peregrination among farms which could be counted by the hundred, and in spite of this Arab existence the preservation of that respectability which is insured by the never-failing production of a well-lined purse.

Reddle spreads its lively hues over everything it lights on, and stamps unmistakably, as with the mark of Cain, any person who has handled it half an hour.

A child's first sight of a reddleman was an epoch in his life. That blood-coloured figure was a sublimation of all the horrid dreams which had afflicted the juvenile spirit since imagination began. 'The reddleman is coming for you!' had been the formulated threat of Wessex mothers for many generations. He was successfully supplanted for a while, at the beginning of the present century, by Buonaparte; but as process of time rendered the latter personage stale and ineffective the older phrase resumed its early prominence. And now the reddleman has in his turn followed Buonaparte to the land of worn-out bogeys, and his place is filled by modern inventions.

The reddleman lived like a gipsy; but gipsies he scorned. He was about as thriving as travelling basket and mat makers; but he had nothing to do with them. He was more decently born and brought up than the cattle-drovers who passed and repassed him in his wanderings; but they merely nodded to him. His stock was more valuable than that of pedlars; but they did not think so, and passed his cart with eyes straight ahead. He was such an unnatural colour to look at that the men of round-about and wax-work shows seemed gentlemen beside him; but he considered them low company, and remained aloof. Among all these squatters and folks of the road the reddleman continually found himself; yet he was not of them. His occupation tended to isolate him, and isolated he was mostly seen to be.

It was sometimes suggested that reddlemen were criminals for whose misdeeds other men had wrongfully suffered: that in escaping the law they had not escaped their own consciences, and had taken to the trade as a lifelong penance. 'Else why should they have chosen it?' In the present case such a question would have been particularly apposite. The reddleman who had entered Egdon that afternoon was an instance of the pleasing being wasted to form the ground-work of the singular, when an ugly foundation would have done just as well for that purpose. The one point that was forbidding about this reddleman was his colour. Freed from that he would have been as agreeable a specimen of rustic manhood as one would often see. A keen observer might have been inclined to think—which was, indeed, partly the truth—that he had relinquished his proper station in life for want of interest in it. Moreover, after looking at him one would have hazarded the guess that goodness, and an acuteness as extreme as it could be without verging on craft, formed the framework of his character.

While he darned the stockings his face became rigid with thought. Softer

expressions followed this, and then again recurred the tender sadness which had sat upon him during his drive along the highway that afternoon. Presently his needle stopped. He laid down the stocking, arose from his seat, and took a leathern pouch from a hook in the corner of the van. This contained among other articles a brown-paper packet, which, to judge from the hinge-like character of its worn folds, seemed to have been carefully opened and closed a good many times. He sat down on a three-legged milking-stool that formed the only seat in the van, and, examining his packet by the light of a candle, took thence an old letter and spread it open. The writing had originally been traced on white paper, but the letter had now assumed a pale red tinge from the accident of his situation; and the black strokes of writing thereon looked like the twigs of a winter hedge against a vermillion sunset. The letter bore a date some two years previous to that time, and was signed 'Thomasin Yeobright.' It ran as follows:—

'DEAR DIGGORY VENN,—The question you put when you overtook me coming home from Pond-close gave me such a surprise that I am afraid I did not make you exactly understand what I meant. Of course, if my aunt had not met me I could have explained all then at once, but as it was there was no chance. I have been quite uneasy since, as you know I do not wish to pain you, yet I fear I shall be doing so now in contradicting what I seemed to say then. I cannot, Diggory, marry you, or think of letting you call me your sweetheart. I could not, indeed, Diggory. I hope you will not much mind my saying this, and feel in a great pain. It makes me very sad when I think it may, for I like you very much, and I always put you next to my cousin Clym in my mind. There are so many reasons why we cannot be married that I can hardly name them all in a letter. I did not in the least expect that you were going to speak on such a thing when you followed me, because I had never thought of you in the sense of a lover at all. You must not becall me for laughing when you spoke; you mistook when you thought I laughed at you as a foolish man. I laughed because the idea was so odd, and not at you at all. The great reason with my own personal self for not letting you court me is, that I do not feel the things a woman ought to feel who consents to walk with you with the meaning of being your wife. It is not as you think, that I have another in my mind, for I do not encourage anybody, and never have in my life. Another reason is my aunt. She would not, I know, agree to it, even if I wished to have you. She likes you very well, but she will want me to look a little higher than a small dairy-farmer, and marry a professional man. I hope you will not set your heart against me for writing plainly, but I felt you might try to see me again, and it is better that we should not meet. I shall always think of you as a good man, and be anxious for your well-doing. I send this by Jane Orchard's little maid,—And remain, Diggory, your faithful friend,

'THOMASIN YEOBRIGHT.

To Mr. VENN, Dairy-farmer.'

Since the arrival of that letter, on a certain autumn morning long ago, the reddleman and Thomasin had not met till to-day. During the interval he had shifted his position even further from hers than it had originally been, by adopting the reddle trade; though he was really in very good circumstances still. Indeed, seeing that his expenditure was only one-fourth of his income, he might have been called a prosperous man.

Rejected suitors take to roaming as naturally as unhived bees; and the business to which he had cynically devoted himself was in many ways congenial to Venn. But his wanderings, by mere stress of old emotions, had frequently taken an Egdon direction, though he never intruded upon her who attracted him thither. To be in Thomasin's heath, and near her, yet unseen, was the one ewe-lamb of pleasure left to him.

Then came the incident of that day, and the reddleman, still loving her well, was excited by this accidental service to her at a critical juncture to vow an active devotion to her cause, instead of, as hitherto, sighing and holding aloof. After what had happened it was impossible that he should not doubt the honesty of Wildev's intentions. But her hope was apparently centred upon him; and dismissing his regrets Venn determined to aid her to be happy in her own chosen way. That this way was, of all others, the most distressing to himself, was awkward enough; but the reddleman's love was generous.

His first active step in watching over Thomasin's interest was taken about seven o'clock the next evening, and was dictated by the news which he had learnt from the sad boy. That Eustacia was somehow the cause of Wildev's carelessness in relation to the marriage had at once been Venn's conclusion on hearing of the secret meeting between them. It did not occur to his mind that Eustacia's love-signal to Wildev was the tender effect upon the deserted beauty of the intelligence which her grandfather had brought home. His instinct was to regard her as a conspirator against rather than as an antecedent obstacle to Thomasin's happiness.

During the day he had been exceedingly anxious to learn the condition of Thomasin; but he did not venture to intrude upon a threshold to which he was a stranger, particularly at such an unpleasant moment as this. He had occupied his time in moving with his ponies and load to a new point in the heath, eastward to his previous station; and here he selected a nook with a careful eye to shelter from wind and rain, which seemed to mean that his stay there was to be a comparatively extended one. After this he returned on foot same part of the way that he had come; and, it being now dark, he diverged to the left till he stood behind a holly-bush on the edge of a pit not twenty yards from Rainbarrow.

He watched for a meeting there, but he watched in vain. Nobody except himself came near the spot that night.

But the loss of his labour produced little effect upon the reddleman. He had stood in the shoes of Tantalus, and seemed to look upon a certain mass of disappointment as the natural preface to all realizations, without which preface they would give cause for alarm.

The same hour the next evening found him again at the same place; but Eustacia and Wildeve, the expected trysters, did not appear.

He pursued precisely the same course yet four nights longer, and without success. But on the next, being the day-week of their previous meeting, he saw a female shape floating along the ridge and the outline of a young man ascending from the valley. They met in the little ditch encircling the barrow—the original excavation from which it had been thrown up by the ancient British people.

The reddleman, stung with suspicion of wrong to Thomasin, was aroused to strategy in a moment. He instantly left the bush and crept forward on his hands and knees. When he had got as close as he might safely venture without discovery he found that, owing to a cross-wind, the conversation of the trysting pair could not be overheard.

Near him, as in divers places about the heath, were areas strewn with large turves, which lay edgeways and upside-down awaiting removal by Timothy Fairway, previous to the winter weather. He took two of these as he lay, and dragged them over him till one covered his head and shoulders, the other his back and legs. The reddleman would now have been quite invisible, even by daylight; the turves, standing upon him with the heather upwards, looked precisely as if they were growing. He crept along again, and the turves upon his back crept with him. Had he approached without any covering the chances are that he would not have been perceived in the dusk; approaching thus, it was as though he burrowed underground. In this manner he came quite close to where the two were standing.

‘Wish to consult me on the matter?’ reached his ears in the rich, impetuous accents of Eustacia Vye. ‘Consult me? It is an indignity to me to talk so: I won’t bear it any longer!’ She began weeping. ‘I have loved you, and have shown you that I loved you, much to my regret; and yet you can come and say in that frigid way that you wish to consult with me whether it would not be better to marry Thomasin. Better—of course it would be. Marry her: she is nearer to your own position in life than I am!’

‘Yes, yes; that’s very well,’ said Wildeve peremptorily. ‘But we must look at things as they are. Whatever blame may attach to me for having brought it about, Thomasin’s position is at present much worse than yours. I simply tell you that I am in a strait.’

‘But you shall not tell me! You must see that it is only harassing me. Damon, you have not acted well; you have sunk in my opinion. You have not valued my courtesy—the courtesy of a lady in loving you—who used to think of far more ambitious things. But it was Thomasin’s fault. She won you away from me, and she deserves to suffer for it. Where is she staying now? Not that I care, nor where I am myself. Ah, if I were dead and gone how glad she would be! Where is she, I ask?’

‘Thomasin is now staying at her aunt’s shut up in a bedroom, and keeping out of everybody’s sight,’ he said indifferently.

‘I don’t think you care much about her even now,’ said Eustacia with

sudden joyousness; 'for if you did you wouldn't talk so coolly about her. Do you talk so coolly to her about me? Ah, I expect you do! Why did you originally go away from me? I don't think I can ever forgive you, except on one condition, that whenever you desert me, you come back again, sorry that you served me so.'

'I never wish to desert you.'

'I do not thank you for that. I should hate it to be all smooth. Indeed, I think I like you to desert me a little once now and then. Love is the dismallest thing where the lover is quite honest. O, it is a shame to say so; but it is true!' She indulged in a little laugh. 'My low spirits begin at the very idea. Don't you offer me tame love, or away you go!'

'I wish Tamsie were not such a confoundedly good little woman,' said Wildev, 'so that I could be faithful to you without injuring a worthy person. It is I who am the sinner after all; I am not worth the little finger of either of you.'

'But you must not sacrifice yourself to her from any sense of justice,' replied Eustacia quickly. 'If you do not love her it is the most merciful thing in the long run to leave her as she is. That's always the best way. There, now I have been unwomanly, I suppose. When you have left me, I am always angry with myself for things that I have said to you.'

Wildev walked a pace or two among the heather without replying. The pause was filled up by the intonation of a pollard thorn a little way to windward, the breezes filtering through its unyielding twigs as through a strainer. It was as if the night sang dirges with clenched teeth.

She continued, half sorrowfully, 'Since meeting you last, it has occurred to me once or twice that perhaps it was not for love of me you did not marry her. Tell me, Damon: I'll try to bear it. Had I nothing whatever to do with the matter?'

'Do you press me to tell?'

'Yes, I must know. I see I have been too ready to believe in my own power.'

'Well, the immediate reason was that the licence would not do for the place, and before I could get another she ran away. Up to that point you had nothing to do with it. Since then her aunt has spoken to me in a tone which I don't at all like.'

'Yes, yes! I am nothing in it—I am nothing in it. You only trifle with me. Heaven, what can I, Eustacia Vye, be made of to think so much of you!'

'Nonsense; do not be so passionate. . . . Eustacia, how we roved among these bushes last year, when the hot days had got cool, and the shades of the hills kept us almost invisible in the hollows!'

She remained in moody silence till she said, 'Yes; and how I used to laugh at you for daring to look up to me! But you have well made me suffer for that since.'

'Yes, you served me cruelly enough until I thought I had found some one fairer than you. A blessed find for me, Eustacia.'

'Do you still think you found somebody fairer?'

'Sometimes I do, sometimes I don't. The scales are balanced so nicely that a feather would turn them.'

'But don't you really care whether I meet you or whether I don't?' she said slowly.

'I care a little, but not enough to break my rest,' replied the young man languidly. 'No, all that's past. I find there are two flowers where I thought there was only one. Perhaps there are three, or four, or any number as good as the first. . . . Mine is a curious fate. Who would have thought that all this could happen to me?'

She interrupted with a suppressed fire of which either love or anger seemed an equally possible issue, 'Do you love me now?'

'Who can say?'

'Tell me; I will know it!'

'I do, and I do not,' said he mischievously. 'That is, I have my times and my seasons. One moment you are too tall, another moment you are too do-nothing, another too melancholy, another too dark, another I don't know what, except—that you are not the whole world to me that you used to be, my dear. But you are a pleasant lady to know, and nice to meet, and I dare say as sweet as ever—almost.'

Eustacia was silent, and she turned from him, till she said, in a voice of suspended mightiness, 'I am for a walk, and this is my way.'

'Well, I can do worse than follow you.'

'You know you can't do otherwise, for all your moods and changes!' she answered defiantly. 'Say what you will; try as you may; keep away from me all that you can—you will never forget me. You will love me all your life long. You would jump to marry me!'

'So I would!' said Wildeve. 'Such strange thoughts as I've had from time to time, Eustacia; and they come to me this moment. You hate the heath as much as ever; that I know.'

'I do,' she murmured deeply. 'Tis my cross, my misery, and will be my death!'

'I abhor it too,' said he. 'How mournfully the wind blows round us now!'

She did not answer. Its tone was indeed solemn and pervasive. Compound utterances addressed themselves to their senses, and it was possible to view by ear the features of the neighbourhood. Acoustic pictures were returned from the darkened scenery; they could hear where the tracts of heather began and ended; where the furze was growing stalky and tall; where it had been recently cut; in what direction the fir-clump lay, and how near was the pit in which the hollies grew; for these differing features had their voices no less than their shapes and colours.

'God, how lonely it is!' resumed Wildeve. 'What are picturesque ravines and mists to us who see nothing else? Why should we stay here? Will you go with me to America? I have kindred in Wisconsin.'

'That wants consideration.'

'It seems impossible to do well here, unless one were a wild bird or a landscape-painter. Well?'

'Give me time,' she softly said, taking his hand. 'America is so far away. Are you going to walk with me a little way?'

As Eustacia uttered the latter words she retired from the base of the barrow, and Wildeve followed her, so that the reddleman could hear no more.

He lifted the turves and arose. Their black figures sank and disappeared from against the sky. They were as two horns which the sluggish heath had put forth from its crown, like a mollusc, and had now again drawn in.

The reddleman's walk across the vale, and over into the next where his cart lay, was not sprightly for a slim young fellow of twenty-four. His spirit was perturbed to aching. The breezes that blew around his mouth in that walk carried off in them the accents of a commination.

He entered the van, where there was a fire in a stove. Without lighting his candle he sat down at once on the three-legged stool, and pondered on what he had seen and heard touching that still loved-one of his. He uttered a sound which was neither sigh nor sob, but was even more indicative than either of a troubled mind.

'My Tamsie,' he whispered heavily. 'What can be done? Yes, I will see that Eustacia Vye.'

X. A DESPERATE ATTEMPT AT PERSUASION

THE next morning, at the time when the height of the sun appeared very insignificant from any part of the heath as compared with the altitude of Rainbarrow, and when all the little hills in the lower levels were like an archipelago in a fog-formed Ægean, the reddleman came from the brambled nook which he had adopted as his quarters and ascended the slopes of Mistover Knap.

Though these shaggy hills were apparently so solitary, several keen round eyes were always ready on such a wintry morning as this to converge upon a passer-by. Feathered species sojourned here in hiding which would have created wonder if found elsewhere. A bustard haunted the spot, and not many years before this five and twenty might have been seen in Egdon at one time. Marsh-harriers looked up from the valley by Wildeve's. A cream-coloured courser had used to visit this hill, a bird so rare that not more than a dozen have ever been seen in England; but a barbarian rested neither night nor day till he had shot the African truant, and after that event cream-coloured coursers thought fit to enter Egdon no more.

A traveller who should walk and observe any of these visitants as Venn observed them now could feel himself to be in direct communication with regions unknown to man. Here in front of him was a wild mallard—just arrived from the home of the north wind. The creature brought within him

an amplitude of Northern knowledge. Glacial catastrophes, snow-storm episodes, glittering auroral effects, Polaris in the zenith, Franklin underfoot,—the category of his commonplaces was wonderful. But the bird, like many other philosophers, seemed as he looked at the reddleman to think that a present moment of comfortable reality was worth a decade of memories.

Venn passed on through these towards the house of the isolated beauty who lived up among them and despised them. The day was Sunday; but as going to church, except to be married or buried, was exceptional at Egdon, this made little difference. He had determined upon the bold stroke of asking for an interview with Miss Vye—to attack her position as Thomasin's rival either by art or by storm, showing therein, somewhat too conspicuously, the want of gallantry characteristic of a certain astute sort of men, from clowns to kings. The great Frederick making war on the beautiful Archduchess, Napoleon refusing terms to the beautiful Queen of Prussia, were not more dead to difference of sex than the reddleman was, in his peculiar way, in planning the displacement of Eustacia.

To call at the captain's cottage was always more or less an undertaking for the inferior inhabitants. Though occasionally chatty, his moods were erratic, and nobody could be certain how he would behave at any particular moment. Eustacia was reserved, and lived very much to herself. Except the daughter of one of the cotters, who was their servant, and a lad who worked in the garden and stable, scarcely any one but themselves ever entered the house. They were the only genteel people of the district except the Yeobrights, and though far from rich, they did not feel that necessity for preserving a friendly face towards every man, bird, and beast which influenced their poorer neighbours.

When the reddleman entered the garden the old man was looking through his glass at the stain of blue in the distant landscape, the little anchors on his buttons twinkling in the sun. He recognized Venn as his companion on the highway, but made no remark on that circumstance, merely saying, 'Ah, reddleman—you here? Have a glass of grog?'

Venn declined, on the plea of it being too early, and stated that his business was with Miss Vye. The captain surveyed him from cap to waistcoat and from waistcoat to leggings for a few moments, and finally asked him to go indoors.

Miss Vye was not to be seen by anybody just then; and the reddleman waited in the window-bench of the kitchen, his hands hanging across his divergent knees, and his cap hanging from his hands.

'I suppose the young lady is not up yet?' he presently said to the servant.

'Not quite yet. Folks never call upon ladies at this time of day.'

'Then I'll step outside,' said Venn. 'If she is willing to see me, will she please send out word, and I'll come in.'

The reddleman left the house and loitered on the hill adjoining. A considerable time elapsed, and no request for his presence was brought. He was beginning to think that his scheme had failed, when he beheld the form of

Eustacia herself coming leisurely towards him. A sense of novelty in giving audience to that singular figure had been sufficient to draw her forth.

She seemed to feel, after a bare look at Diggory Venn, that the man had come on a strange errand, and that he was not so mean as she had thought him; for her close approach did not cause him to writhe uneasily, or shift his feet, or show any of those little signs which escape an ingenuous rustic at the advent of the uncommon in womankind. On his inquiring if he might have a conversation with her she replied, 'Yes, walk beside me;' and continued to move on.

Before they had gone far it occurred to the perspicacious reddleman that he would have acted more wisely by appearing less unimpressible, and he resolved to correct the error as soon as he could find opportunity.

'I have made so bold, miss, as to step across and tell you some strange news which has come to my ears about that man.'

'Ah! what man?'

He jerked his elbow to south-east—the direction of the Quiet Woman.

Eustacia turned quickly to him. 'Do you mean Mr. Wildeve?'

'Yes, there is trouble in a household on account of him, and I have come to let you know of it, because I believe you might have power to drive it away.'

'I? What is the trouble?'

'It is quite a secret. It is that he may refuse to marry Thomasin Yeobright after all.'

Eustacia, though set inwardly pulsing by his words, was equal to her part in such a drama as this. She replied coldly, 'I do not wish to listen to this, and you must not expect me to interfere.'

'But, miss, you will hear one word?'

'I cannot. I am not interested in the marriage, and even if I were I could not compel Mr. Wildeve to do my bidding.'

'As the only lady on the heath I think you might,' said Venn with subtle indirectness. 'This is how the case stands. Mr. Wildeve would marry Thomasin at once, and make all matters smooth, if so be there were not another woman in the case. This other woman is some person he has picked up with, and meets on the heath occasionally, I believe. He will never marry her, and yet through her he may never marry the woman who loves him dearly. Now, if you, miss, who have so much sway over us men-folk, were to insist that he should treat your young neighbour Tamsin with honourable kindness and give up the other woman, he would perhaps do it, and save her a good deal of misery.'

'Ah, my life!' said Eustacia, with a laugh which unclosed her lips, so that the sun shone into her mouth as into a tulip, and lent it a similar scarlet fire. 'You think too much of my influence over men-folk indeed, reddleman. If I had such a power as you imagine I would go straight and use it for the good of anybody who has been kind to me—which Thomasin Yeobright has not particularly, to my knowledge.'

'Can it be that you really don't know of it—how much she has always thought of you?'

'I have never heard a word of it. Although we live only two miles apart I have never been inside her aunt's house in my life.'

The superciliousness that lurked in her manner told Venn that thus far he had utterly failed. He inwardly sighed and felt it necessary to unmask his second argument.

'Well, leaving that out of the question, 'tis in your power, I assure you, Miss Vye, to do a great deal of good to another woman.'

She shook her head.

'Your comeliness is law with Mr. Wildeve. It is law with all men who see ye. They say, "This well-favoured lady coming—what's her name? How handsome!" Handsomer than Thomasin Yeobright,' the reddleman persisted, saying to himself, 'God forgive a rascal for lying!' And she was handsomer, but the reddleman was far from thinking so. There was a certain obscurity in Eustacia's beauty, and Venn's eye was not trained. In her winter dress, as now, she was like the tiger-beetle, which, when observed in dull situations, seems to be of the quietest neutral colour, but under a full illumination blazes with dazzling splendour.

Eustacia could not help replying, though conscious that she endangered her dignity thereby. 'Many women are lovelier than Thomasin,' she said; 'so not much attaches to that.'

The reddleman suffered the wound and went on: 'He is a man who notices the looks of women, and you could twist him to your will like withywind, if you only had the mind.'

'Surely what she cannot do who has been so much with him I cannot do living up here away from him.'

The reddleman wheeled and looked her in the face. 'Miss Vye!' he said.

'Why do you say that—as if you doubted me?' She spoke faintly, and her breathing was quick. 'The idea of your speaking in that tone to me!' she added, with a forced smile of hauteur. 'What could have been in your mind to lead you to speak like that?'

'Miss Vye, why should you make-believe that you don't know this man?—I know why, certainly. He is beneath you, and you are ashamed.'

'You are mistaken. What do you mean?'

The reddleman had decided to play the card of truth. 'I was at the meeting by Rainbarrow last night and heard every word,' he said. 'The woman that stands between Wildeve and Thomasin is yourself.'

It was a disconcerting lift of the curtain, and the mortification of Candaules' wife glowed in her. The moment had arrived when her lip would tremble in spite of herself, and when the gasp could no longer be kept down.

'I am unwell,' she said hurriedly. 'No—it is not that—I am not in a humour to hear you further. Leave me, please.'

'I must speak, Miss Vye, in spite of paining you. What I would put before you is this. However it may come about—whether she is to blame, or you—

her case is without doubt worse than yours. Your giving up Mr. Wildeve will be a real advantage to you, for how could you marry him? Now she cannot get off so easily—everybody will blame her if she loses him. Then I ask you—not because her right is best, but because her situation is worse—to give him up to her.’

‘No—I won’t, I won’t!’ she said impetuously, quite forgetful of her previous manner towards the reddleman as an underling. ‘Nobody has ever been served so! It was going on well—I will not be beaten down—by an inferior woman like her. It is very well for you to come and plead for her, but is she not herself the cause of all her own trouble? Am I not to show favour to any person I may choose without asking permission of a parcel of cottagers? She has come between me and my inclination, and now that she finds herself rightly punished she gets you to plead for her!’

‘Indeed,’ said Venn earnestly, ‘she knows nothing whatever about it. It is only I who ask you to give him up. It will be better for her and you both. People will say bad things if they find out that a lady secretly meets a man who has ill-used another woman.’

‘I have *not* injured her: he was mine before he was hers! He came back—because—because he liked me best!’ she said wildly. ‘But I lose all self-respect in talking to you. What am I giving way to!’

‘I can keep secrets,’ said Venn gently. ‘You need not fear. I am the only man who knows of your meetings with him. There is but one thing more to speak of, and then I will be gone. I heard you say to him that you hated living here—that Egdon heath was a jail to you.’

‘I did say so. There is a sort of beauty in the scenery, I know; but it is a jail to me. The man you mention does not save me from that feeling, though he lives here. I should have cared nothing for him had there been a better person near.’

The reddleman looked hopeful: after these words from her his third attempt seemed promising. ‘As we have now opened our minds a bit, miss,’ he said, ‘I’ll tell you what I have got to propose. Since I have taken to the riddle trade I travel a good deal, as you know.’

She inclined her head, and swept round so that her eyes rested in the misty vale beneath them.

‘And in my travels I go near Budmouth. Now Budmouth is a wonderful place—wonderful—a great salt sheening sea bending into the land like a bow—thousands of gentlepeople walking up and down—bands of music playing—officers by sea and officers by land walking among the rest—out of every ten folk you meet nine of ’em in love.’

‘I know it,’ she said disdainfully. ‘I know Budmouth better than you. I was born there. My father came to be a military musician there from abroad. Ah, my soul, Budmouth! I wish I was there now.’

The reddleman was surprised to see how a slow fire could blaze on occasion. ‘If you were, miss,’ he replied, ‘in a week’s time you would think no

more of Wildeva than of one of those he'th-croppers that we see yond. Now, I could get you there.'

'How?' said Eustacia, with intense curiosity in her heavy eyes.

'My uncle has been for five and twenty years the trusty man of a rich widow-lady who has a beautiful house facing the sea. This lady has become old and lame, and she wants a young company-keeper to read and sing to her, but can't get one to her mind to save her life, though she've advertised in the papers, and tried half a dozen. She would jump to get you, and uncle would make it all easy.'

'I should have to work, perhaps?'

'No, not real work: you'd have a little to do, such as reading and that. You would not be wanted till New Year's Day.'

'I knew it meant work,' she said, drooping to languor again.

'I confess there would be a trifle to do in the way of amusing her; but though idle people might call it work, working people would call it play. Think of the company and the life you'd lead, miss; the gaiety you'd see, and the gentleman you'd marry. My uncle is to inquire for a trustworthy young lady from the country, as she don't like town girls.'

'It is to wear myself out to please her! and I won't go. O, if I could live in a gay town as a lady should, and go my own ways, and do my own doings, I'd give the wrinkled half of my life! Yes, reddleman, that would I.'

'Help me to get Thomasin happy, miss, and the chance shall be yours,' urged her companion.

'Chance!—'tis no chance,' she said proudly. 'What can a poor man like you offer me, indeed?—I am going indoors. I have nothing more to say. Don't your horses want feeding, or your reddlebags want mending, or don't you want to find buyers for your goods, that you stay idling here like this?'

Venn spoke not another word. With his hands behind him he turned away, that she might not see the hopeless disappointment in his face. The mental clearness and power he had found in this lonely girl had indeed filled his manner with misgiving even from the first few minutes of close quarters with her. Her youth and situation had led him to expect a simplicity quite at the beck of his method. But a system of inducement which might have carried weaker country lasses along with it had merely repelled Eustacia. As a rule, the word Budmouth meant fascination on Egdon. That rising port and watering-place, if truly mirrored in the minds of the heath-folk, must have combined, in a charming and indescribable manner, a Carthaginian bustle of building with Tarentine luxuriousness and Baian health and beauty. Eustacia felt little less extravagantly about the place; but she would not sink her independence to get there.

When Diggory Venn had gone quite away, Eustacia walked to the bank and looked down the wild and picturesque vale towards the sun, which was also in the direction of Wildeva's. The mist had now so far collapsed that the tips of the trees and bushes around his house could just be discerned, as if boring upwards through a vast white cobweb which cloaked them from the

day. There was no doubt that her mind was inclined thitherward; indefinitely, fancifully—twining and untwining about him as the single object within her horizon on which dreams might crystallize. The man who had begun by being merely her amusement, and would never have been more than her hobby but for his skill in deserting her at the right moments, was now again her desire. Cessation in his love-making had revived her love. Such feeling as Eustacia had idly given to Wildeve was damned into a flood by Thomasin. She had used to tease Wildeve, but that was before another had favoured him. Often a drop of irony into an indifferent situation renders the whole piquant.

‘I will never give him up—never!’ she said impetuously.

The reddleman’s hint that rumour might show her to disadvantage had no permanent terror for Eustacia. She was as unconcerned at that contingency as a goddess at a lack of linen. This did not originate in inherent shamelessness, but in her living too far from the world to feel the impact of public opinion. Zenobia in the desert could hardly have cared what was said about her at Rome. As far as social ethics were concerned Eustacia approached the savage state, though in emotion she was all the while an epicure. She had advanced to the secret recesses of sensuousness, yet had hardly crossed the threshold of conventionality.

XI. THE DISHONESTY OF AN HONEST WOMAN

THE reddleman had left Eustacia’s presence with desponding views on Thomasin’s future happiness; but he was awakened to the fact that one other channel remained untried by seeing, as he followed the way to his van, the form of Mrs. Yeobright slowly walking towards the Quiet Woman. He went across to her; and could almost perceive in her anxious face that this journey of hers to Wildeve was undertaken with the same object as his own to Eustacia.

She did not conceal the fact. ‘Then,’ said the reddleman, ‘you may as well leave it alone, Mrs. Yeobright.’

‘I half think so myself,’ she said. ‘But nothing else remains to be done besides pressing the question upon him.’

‘I should like to say a word first,’ said Venn, firmly. ‘Mr. Wildeve is not the only man who has asked Thomasin to marry him; and why should not another have a chance? Mrs. Yeobright, I should be glad to marry your niece, and would have done it any time these last two years. There, now it is out, and I have never told anybody before but herself.’

Mrs. Yeobright was not demonstrative, but her eyes involuntarily glanced towards his singular though shapely figure.

‘Looks are not everything,’ said the reddleman, noticing the glance. ‘There’s many a calling that don’t bring in so much as mine, if it comes to money; and perhaps I am not so much worse off than Wildeve. There is nobody so poor as

these professional fellows who have failed; and if you shouldn't like my redness—well, I am not red by birth, you know; I only took to this business for a freak; and I might turn my hand to something else in good time.'

'I am much obliged to you for your interest in my niece; but I fear there would be objections. More than that, she is devoted to this man.'

'True; or I shouldn't have done what I have this morning.'

'Otherwise there would be no pain in the case, and you would not see me going to his house now. What was Thomasin's answer when you told her of your feelings?'

'She wrote that you would object to me; and other things.'

'She was in a measure right. You must not take this unkindly: I merely state it as a truth. You have been good to her, and we do not forget it. But as she was unwilling on her own account to be your wife, that settles the point without my wishes being concerned.'

'Yes. But there is a difference between then and now, ma'am. She is distressed now, and I have thought that if you were to talk to her about me, and think favourably of me yourself, there might be a chance of winning her round, and getting her quite independent of this Wildeve's backward and forward play, and his not knowing whether he'll have her or no.'

Mrs. Yeobright shook her head. 'Thomasin thinks, and I think with her, that she ought to be Wildeve's wife, if she means to appear before the world without a slur upon her name. If they marry soon, everybody will believe that an accident did really prevent the wedding. If not, it may cast a shade upon her character—at any rate make her ridiculous. In short, if it is anyhow possible they must marry now.'

'I thought that till half an hour ago. But, after all, why should her going off with him to Anglebury for a few hours do her any harm? Anybody who knows how pure she is will feel any such thought to be quite unjust. I have been trying this morning to help on this marriage with Wildeve—yes, I, ma'am—in the belief that I ought to do it, because she was so wrapped up in him. But I much question if I was right, after all. However, nothing came of it. And now I offer myself.'

Mrs. Yeobright appeared disinclined to enter further into the question. 'I fear I must go on,' she said. 'I do not see that anything else can be done.'

And she went on. But though this conversation did not divert Thomasin's aunt from her purposed interview with Wildeve, it made a considerable difference in her mode of conducting that interview. She thanked God for the weapon which the reddleman had put into her hands.

Wildeve was at home when she reached the inn. He showed her silently into the parlour, and closed the door. Mrs. Yeobright began—

'I have thought it my duty to call to-day. A new proposal has been made to me, which has rather astonished me. It will affect Thomasin greatly; and I have decided that it should at least be mentioned to you.'

'Yes? What is it?' he said civilly.

'It is, of course, in reference to her future. You may not be aware that

another man has shown himself anxious to marry Thomasin. Now, though I have not encouraged him yet, I cannot conscientiously refuse him a chance any longer. I don't wish to be short with you; but I must be fair to him and to her.'

'Who is the man?' said Wildeve with surprise.

'One who has been in love with her longer than she has with you. He proposed to her two years ago. At that time she refused him.'

'Well?'

'He has seen her lately, and has asked me for permission to pay his addresses to her. She may not refuse him twice.'

'What is his name?'

Mrs. Yeobright declined to say. 'He is a man Thomasin likes,' she added, 'and one whose constancy she respects at least. It seems to me that what she refused then she would be glad to get now. She is much annoyed at her awkward position.'

'She never once told me of this old lover.'

'The gentlest women are not such fools as to show *every* card.'

'Well, if she wants him I suppose she must have him.'

'It is easy enough to say that; but you don't see the difficulty. He wants her much more than she wants him; and before I can encourage anything of the sort I must have a clear understanding from you that you will not interfere to injure an arrangement which I promote in the belief that it is for the best. Suppose, when they are engaged, and everything is smoothly arranged for their marriage, that you should step between them and renew your suit? You might not win her back, but you might cause much unhappiness.'

'Of course I should do no such thing,' said Wildeve. 'But they are not engaged yet. How do you know that Thomasin would accept him?'

'That's a question I have carefully put to myself; and upon the whole the probabilities are in favour of her accepting him in time. I flatter myself that I have some influence over her. She is pliable, and I can be strong in my recommendations of him.'

'And in your disparagement of me at the same time.'

'Well, you may depend upon my not praising you,' she said drily. 'And if this seems like manœuvring, you must remember that her position is peculiar, and that she had been hardly used. I shall also be helped in making the match by her own desire to escape from the humiliation of her present state; and a woman's pride in these cases will lead her a very great way. A little mananging may be required to bring her round; but I am equal to that, provided that you agree to the one thing indispensable; that is, to make a distinct declaration that she is to think no more of you as a possible husband. That will pique her into accepting him.'

'I can hardly say that just now, Mrs. Yeobright. It is so sudden.'

'And so my whole plan is interfered with! It is very inconvenient that you refuse to help my family even to the small extent of saying distinctly you will have nothing to do with us.'

Wildeve reflected uncomfortably. 'I confess I was not prepared for this,' he said. 'Of course I'll give her up if you wish, if it is necessary. But I thought I might be her husband.'

'We have heard that before.'

'Now, Mrs. Yeobright, don't let us disagree. Give me a fair time. I don't want to stand in the way of any better chance she may have; only I wish you had let me know earlier. I will write to you or call in a day or two. Will that suffice?'

'Yes,' she replied, 'provided you promise not to communicate with Thomas without my knowledge.'

'I promise that,' he said. And the interview then terminated, Mrs. Yeobright returning homeward as she had come.

By far the greatest effect of her simple strategy on that day was, as often happens, in a quarter quite outside her view when arranging it. In the first place, her visit sent Wildeve the same evening after dark to Eustacia's house at Mistover.

At this hour the lonely dwelling was closely blinded and shuttered from the chill and darkness without. Wildeve's clandestine plan with her was to take a little gravel in his hand and hold it to the crevice at the top of the window-shutter, which was on the outside, so that it should fall with a gentle rustle, resembling that of a mouse, between shutter and glass. This precaution in attracting her attention was to avoid arousing the suspicions of her grandfather.

The soft words, 'I hear; wait for me,' in Eustacia's voice from within told him that she was alone.

He waited in his customary manner by walking round the enclosure and idling by the pool, for Wildeve was never asked into the house by his proud though condescending mistress. She showed no sign of coming out in a hurry. The time wore on, and he began to grow impatient. In the course of twenty minutes she appeared from round the corner, and advanced as if merely taking an airing.

'You would not have kept me so long had you known what I come about,' he said with bitterness. 'Still, you are worth waiting for.'

'What has happened?' said Eustacia. 'I did not know you were in trouble. I too am gloomy enough.'

'I am not in trouble,' said he. 'It is merely that affairs have come to a head, and I must take a clear course.'

'What course is that?' she asked with attentive interest.

'And can you forget so soon what I proposed to you the other night? Why, take you from this place, and carry you away with me abroad.'

'I have not forgotten. But why have you come so unexpectedly to repeat the question, when you only promised to come next Saturday? I thought I was to have plenty of time to consider.'

'Yes, but the situation is different now.'

'Explain to me.'

'I don't want to explain, for I may pain you.'

'But I must know the reason of this hurry.'

'It is simply my ardour, dear Eustacia. Everything is smooth now.'

'Then why are you so ruffled?'

'I am not aware of it. All is as it should be. Mrs. Yeobright—but she is nothing to us.'

'Ah, I knew she had something to do with it! Come, I don't like reserve.'

'No—she has nothing. She only says she wishes me to give up Thomasin because another man is anxious to marry her. The woman, now she no longer needs me, actually shows off!' Wildeve's vexation had escaped him in spite of himself.

Eustacia was silent a long while. 'You are in the awkward position of an official who is no longer wanted,' she said in a changed tone.

'It seems so. But I have not yet seen Thomasin.'

'And that irritates you. Don't deny it, Damon. You are actually nettled by this slight from an unexpected quarter.'

'Well?'

'And you come to get me because you cannot get her. This is certainly a new position altogether. I am to be a stop-gap.'

'Please remember that I proposed the same thing the other day.'

Eustacia again remained in a sort of stupefied silence. What curious feeling was this coming over her? Was it really possible that her interest in Wildeve had been so entirely the result of antagonism that the glory and the dream departed from the man with the first sound that he was no longer coveted by her rival? She was, then, secure of him at last. Thomasin no longer required him. What a humiliating victory! He loved her best, she thought; and yet—dared she to murmur such treacherous criticism ever so softly?—what was the man worth whom a woman inferior to herself did not value? The sentiment which lurks more or less in all animate nature—that of not desiring the undesired of others—was lively as a passion in the supersubtle, epicurean heart of Eustacia. Her social superiority over him, which hitherto had scarcely ever impressed her, became unpleasantly insistent, and for the first time she felt that she had stooped in loving him.

'Well, darling, you agree?' said Wildeve.

'If it could be London, or even Budmouth, instead of America,' she murmured languidly. 'Well, I will think. It is too great a thing for me to decide off-hand. I wish I hated the heath less—or loved you more.'

'You can be painfully frank. You loved me a month ago warmly enough to go anywhere with me.'

'And you loved Thomasin.'

'Yes, perhaps that was where the reason lay,' he returned, with almost a sneer. 'I don't hate her now.'

'Exactly. The only thing is that you can no longer get her.'

'Come—no taunts, Eustacia, or we shall quarrel. If you don't agree to go with me, and agree shortly, I shall go by myself.'

'Or try Thomasin again. Damon, how strange it seems that you could have married her or me indifferently, and only have come to me because I am—cheapest! Yes, yes—it is true. There was a time when I should have exclaimed against a man of that sort, and been quite wild; but it is all past now.'

'Will you go, dearest? Come secretly with me to Bristol, marry me, and turn our backs upon this doghole of England for ever? Say yes.'

'I want to get away from here at almost any cost,' she said with weariness, 'but I don't like to go with you. Give me more time to decide.'

'I have already,' said Wildevé. 'Well, I give you one more week.'

'A little longer, so that I may tell you decisively. I have to consider so many things. Fancy Thomasin being anxious to get rid of you! I cannot forget it.'

'Never mind that. Say Monday week. I will be here precisely at this time.'

'Let it be at Rainbarrow,' said she. 'This is too near home; my grandfather may be walking out.'

'Thank you, dear. On Monday week at this time I will be at the Barrow. Till then good-bye.'

'Good-bye. No, no, you must not touch me now. Shaking hands is enough till I have made up my mind.'

Eustacia watched his shadowy form till it had disappeared. She placed her hand to her forehead and breathed heavily; and then her rich, romantic lips parted under the homely impulse—a yawn. She was immediately angry at having betrayed even to herself the possible evanescence of her passion for him. She could not admit at once that she might have over-estimated Wildevé, for to perceive his mediocrity now was to admit her own great folly heretofore. And the discovery that she was the owner of a disposition so purely that of the dog in the manger, had something in it which at first made her ashamed.

The fruit of Mrs. Yeobright's diplomacy was indeed remarkable, though not as yet of the kind she had anticipated. It had apparently influenced Wildevé, but it was influencing Eustacia far more. Her lover was no longer to her an exciting man whom many women strove for, and herself could only retain by striving with them. He was a superfluity.

She went indoors in that peculiar state of misery which is not exactly grief, and which especially attends the dawns of reason in the latter days of an ill-judged, transient love. To be conscious that the end of the dream is approaching, and yet has not absolutely come, is one of the most wearisome as well as the most curious stages along the course between the beginning of a passion and its end.

Her grandfather had returned, and was busily engaged in pouring some gallons of newly arrived rum into the square bottles of his square cellaret. Whenever these home supplies were exhausted he would go to the Quiet Woman, and, standing with his back to the fire, grog in hand, tell remarkable stories of how he had lived seven years under the water-line of his ship, and other naval wonders, to the natives, who hoped too earnestly for a treat of ale from the teller to exhibit any doubts of his truth.

He had been there this evening. 'I suppose you have heard the Egdon news, Eustacia?' he said, without looking up from the bottles. 'The men have been talking about it at the Woman as if it were of national importance.'

'I have heard none,' she said.

'Young Clym Yeobright, as they call him, is coming home next week to spend Christmas with his mother. He is a fine fellow by this time, it seems. I suppose you remember him?'

'I never saw him in my life.'

'Ah, true; he left before you came here. I well remember him as a promising boy.'

'Where has he been living all these years?'

'In that rookery of pomp and vanity, Paris, I believe.'

BOOK TWO: THE ARRIVAL

I. TIDINGS OF THE COMER

ON fine days at this time of the year, and earlier, certain ephemeral operations were apt to disturb, in their trifling way, the majestic calm of Egdon Heath. They were activities which, beside those of a town, a village, or even a farm, would have appeared as the ferment of stagnation merely, a creeping of the flesh of somnolence. But here, away from comparisons, shut in by the stable hills, among which mere walking had the novelty of pageantry, and where any man could imagine himself to be Adam without the least difficulty, they attracted the attention of every bird within eye-shot, every reptile not yet asleep, and set the surrounding rabbits curiously watching from hillocks at a safe distance.

The performance was that of bringing together and building into a stack the furze-faggots which Humphrey had been cutting for the captain's use during the foregoing fine days. The stack was at the end of the dwelling, and the men engaged in building it were Humphrey and Sam, the old man looking on.

It was a fine and quiet afternoon, about three o'clock; but the winter solstice having stealthily come on, the lowness of the sun caused the hour to seem later than it actually was, there being little here to remind an inhabitant that he must unlearn his summer experience of the sky as a dial. In the course of many days and weeks sunrise had advanced its quarters from north-east to south-east, sunset had receded from north-west to south-west; but Egdon had hardly heeded the change.

Eustacia was indoors in the dining-room which was really more like a kitchen, having a stone floor and a gaping chimney-corner. The air was still, and while she lingered a moment here alone sounds of voices in conversation came to her ears directly down the chimney. She entered the recess, and, listening, looked up the old irregular shaft, with its cavernous hollows, where the smoke blundered about on its way to the square bit of sky at the top, from which the daylight struck down with a pallid glare upon the tatters of soot draping the flue as sea-weed drapes a rocky fissure.

She remembered: the furze-stack was not far from the chimney, and the voices were those of the workers.

Her grandfather joined in the conversation. 'That lad ought never to have left home. His father's occupation would have suited him best, and the boy should have followed on. I don't believe in these new moves in families. My father was a sailor, so was I, and so should my son have been if I had had one.'

'The place he's been living at is Paris,' said Humphrey, 'and they tell me 'tis where the king's head was cut off years ago. My poor mother used to tell me about that business. "Hummy," she used to say, "I was a young maid then, and as I was at home ironing mother's caps one afternoon the parson came in and said, "They've cut the king's head off, Jane; and what 'twill be next God knows."'"

'A good many of us knew as well as He before long,' said the captain, chuckling. 'I lived seven years under water on account of it in my boyhood—in that damned surgery of the *Triumph*, seeing men brought down to the cockpit with their legs and arms blown to Jericho. . . . And so the young man has settled in Paris. Manager to a diamond merchant, or some such thing, is he not?'

'Yes, sir, that's it. 'Tis a blazing great business that he belongs to, so I've heard his mother say—like a king's palace, so far as diments go.'

'I can well mind when he left home,' said Sam.

''Tis a good thing for the feller,' said Humphrey. 'A sight of times better to be selling diments than nobbling about here.'

'It must cost a good few shillings to deal at such a place.'

'A good few indeed, my man,' replied the captain. 'Yes, you may make away with a deal of money and be neither drunkard nor glutton.'

'They say, too, that Clym Yeobright is become a real perusing man, with the strangest notions about things. There, that's because he went to school early, such as the school was.'

'Strange notions, has he?' said the old man. 'Ah, there's too much of that sending to school in these days! It only does harm. Every gatepost and barn's door you come to is sure to have some bad word or other chalked upon it by the young rascals: a woman can hardly pass for shame sometimes. If they'd never been taught how to write they wouldn't have been able to scribble such villainy. Their fathers couldn't do it, and the country was all the better for it.'

'Now, I should think, cap'n, that Miss Eustacia had about as much in her head that comes from books as anybody about here?'

'Perhaps if Miss Eustacia, too, had less romantic nonsense in her head it would be better for her,' said the captain shortly; after which he walked away.

'I say, Sam,' observed Humphrey when the old man was gone, 'she and Clym Yeobright would make a very pretty pigeon pair—hey? If they wouldn't I'll be dazed! Both of one mind about niceties for certain, and learned in print, and always thinking about high doctrine—there couldn't be a better couple if they were made o' purpose. Clym's family is as good as hers. His father was a farmer, that's true; but his mother was a sort of lady, as we know. Nothing would please me better than to see them two man and wife.'

'They'd look very natty, arm-in-crook together, and their best clothes on, whether or no, if he's at all the well-favoured fellow he used to be.'

'They would, Humphrey. Well, I should like to see the chap terrible much after so many years. If I knew for certain when he was coming I'd

stroll out three or four miles to meet him and help carry anything for'n; though I suppose he's altered from the boy he was. They say he can talk French as fast as a maid can eat blackberries; and if so, depend upon it we who have stayed at home shall seem no more than scroff in his eyes.'

'Coming across the water to Budmouth by steamer, isn't he?'

'Yes; but how he's coming from Budmouth I don't know.'

'That's a bad trouble about his cousin Thomasin. I wonder such a nice-notioned fellow as Clym likes to come home into it. What a nunnywatch we were in, to be sure, when we heard they weren't married at all, after singing to 'em as man and wife that night! Be dazed if I should like a relation of mine to have been made such a fool of by a man. It makes the family look small.'

'Yes. Poor maid, her heart has ached enough about it. Her health is suffering from it, I hear, for she will bide entirely indoors. We never see her out now, scampering over the furze with a face as red as a rose, as she used to do.'

'I've heard she wouldn't have Wildeve now if he asked her.'

'You have? 'Tis news to me.'

While the furze-gatherers had desultorily conversed thus Eustacia's face gradually bent to the hearth in a profound reverie, her toe unconsciously tapping the dry turf which lay burning at her feet.

The subject of their discourse had been keenly interesting to her. A young and clever man was coming into that lonely heath from, of all contrasting places in the world, Paris. It was like a man coming from heaven. More singular still, the heathmen had instinctively coupled her and this man together in their minds as a pair born for each other.

That five minutes of overhearing furnished Eustacia with visions enough to fill the whole blank afternoon. Such sudden alternations from mental vacuity do sometimes occur thus quietly. She could never have believed in the morning that her colourless inner world would before night become as animated as water under a microscope, and that without the arrival of a single visitor. The words of Sam and Humphrey on the harmony between the unknown and herself had on her mind the effect of the invading Bard's prelude in the 'Castle of Indolence,' at which myriads of imprisoned shapes arose where had previously appeared the stillness of a void.

Involved in these imaginings she knew nothing of time. When she became conscious of externals it was dusk. The furze-rick was finished; the men had gone home. Eustacia went upstairs, thinking that she would take a walk at this her usual time; and she determined that her walk should be in the direction of Blooms-End, the birthplace of young Yeobright and the present home of his mother. She had no reason for walking elsewhere, and why should she not go that way? The scene of a day-dream is sufficient for a pilgrimage at nineteen. To look at the palings before the Yeobrights' house had the dignity of a necessary performance. Strange that such a piece of idling should have seemed an important errand.

She put on her bonnet, and, leaving the house, descended the hill on the side towards Blooms-End, where she walked slowly along the valley for a distance of a mile and a half. This brought her to a spot in which the green bottom of the dale began to widen, the furze bushes to recede yet further from the path on each side, till they were diminished to an isolated one here and there by the increasing fertility of the soil. Beyond the irregular carpet of grass was a row of white palings, which marked the verge of the heath in this latitude. They showed upon the dusky scene that they bordered as distinctly as white lace on velvet. Behind the white palings was a little garden; behind the garden an old, irregular, thatched house, facing the heath, and commanding a full view of the valley. This was the obscure, removed spot to which was about to return a man whose latter life had been passed in the French capital—the centre and vortex of the fashionable world.

II. THE PEOPLE AT BLOOMS-END MAKE READY

At that afternoon the expected arrival of the subject of Eustacia's ruminations created a bustle of preparation at Blooms-End. Thomasin had been persuaded by her aunt, and by an instinctive impulse of loyalty towards her cousin Clym, to bestir herself on his account with an alacrity unusual in her during these most sorrowful days of her life. At the time that Eustacia was listening to the rick-makers' conversation on Clym's return, Thomasin was climbing into a loft over her aunt's fuel-house, where the store-apples were kept, to search out the best and largest of them for the coming holiday-time.

The loft was lighted by a semicircular hole, through which the pigeons crept to their lodgings in the same high quarters of the premises; and from this hole the sun shone in a bright yellow patch upon the figure of the maiden as she knelt and plunged her naked arms into the soft brown fern, which, from its abundance, was used on Egdon in packing away stores of all kinds. The pigeons were flying about her head with the greatest unconcern, and the face of her aunt was just visible above the floor of the loft, lit by a few stray motes of light, as she stood half-way up the ladder, looking at a spot into which she was not climber enough to venture.

'Now a few russets, Tamsin. He used to like them almost as well as ribstones.'

Thomasin turned and rolled aside the fern from another nook, where more mellow fruit greeted her with its ripe smell. Before picking them out she stopped a moment.

'Dear Clym, I wonder how your face looks now?' she said, gazing abstractedly at the pigeon-hole, which admitted the sunlight so directly upon her brown hair and transparent tissues that it almost seemed to shine through her.

'If he could have been dear to you in another way,' said Mrs. Yeobright from the ladder, 'this might have been a happy meeting.'

'Is there any use in saying what can do no good, aunt?'

'Yes,' said her aunt, with some warmth. 'To thoroughly fill the air with the past misfortune, so that other girls may take warning and keep clear of it.'

Thomasin lowered her face to the apples again. 'I am a warning to others, just as thieves and drunkards and gamblers are,' she said in a low voice. 'What a class to belong to! Do I really belong to them? 'Tis absurd! Yet why, aunt, does everybody keep on making me think that I do, by the way they behave towards me? Why don't people judge me by my acts? Now, look at me as I kneel here, picking up these apples—do I look like a lost woman? . . . I wish all good women were as good as I!' she added vehemently.

'Strangers don't see you as I do,' said Mrs. Yeobright; 'they judge from false report. Well, it is a silly job, and I am partly to blame'

'How quickly a rash thing can be done!' replied the girl. Her lips were quivering, and tears so crowded themselves into her eyes that she could hardly distinguish apples from fern as she continued industriously searching to hide her weakness

'As soon as you have finished getting the apples,' her aunt said, descending the ladder, 'come down, and we'll go for the holly. There is nobody on the heath this afternoon, and you need not fear being stared at. We must get some berries, or Clym will never believe in our preparations.'

Thomasin came down when the apples were collected, and together they went through the white palings to the heath beyond. The open hills were airy and clear, and the remote atmosphere appeared, as it often appears on a fine winter day, in distinct planes of illumination independently toned, the rays which lit the nearer tracts of landscape streaming visibly across those further off: a stratum of ensaffroned light was imposed on a stratum of deep blue, and behind these lay still remoter scenes wrapped in frigid grey.

They reached the place where the hollies grew, which was in a conical pit, so that the tops of the trees were not much above the general level of the ground. Thomasin stepped up into a fork of one of the bushes, as she had done under happier circumstances on many similar occasions, and with a small chopper that they had brought she began to lop off the heavily berried boughs.

'Don't scratch your face,' said her aunt, who stood at the edge of the pit, regarding the girl as she held on amid the glistening green and scarlet masses of the tree. 'Will you walk with me to meet him this evening?'

'I should like to. Else it would seem as if I had forgotten him,' said Thomasin, tossing out a bough. 'Not that that would matter much; I belong to one man; nothing can alter that. And that man I must marry, for my pride's sake.'

'I am afraid——' began Mrs. Yeobright.

'Ah, you think, "That weak girl—how is she going to get a man to marry

her when she chooses?" But let me tell you one thing, aunt: Mr. Wildeve is not a profligate man, any more than I am an improper woman. He has an unfortunate manner, and doesn't try to make people like him if they don't wish to do it of their own accord.'

'Thomasin,' said Mrs. Yeobright quietly, fixing her eye upon her niece, 'do you think you deceive me in your defence of Mr. Wildeve?'

'How do you mean?'

'I have long had a suspicion that your love for him has changed its colour since you have found him not to be the saint you thought him, and that you act a part to me.'

'He wished to marry me, and I wish to marry him.'

'Now, I put it to you: would you at this present moment agree to be his wife if that had not happened to entangle you with him?'

Thomasin looked into the tree and appeared much disturbed. 'Aunt,' she said presently, 'I have, I think, a right to refuse to answer that question.'

'Yes, you have.'

'You may think what you choose. I have never implied to you by word or deed that I have grown to think otherwise of him, and I never will. And I shall marry him.'

'Well, wait till he repeats his offer. I think he may do it, now that he knows—something I told him. I don't for a moment dispute that it is the most proper thing for you to marry him. Much as I have objected to him in bygone days, I agree with you now, you may be sure. It is the only way out of a false position, and a very galling one.'

'What did you tell him?'

'That he was standing in the way of another lover of yours.'

'Aunt,' said Thomasin, with round eyes, 'what *do* you mean?'

'Don't be alarmed; it was my duty. I can say no more about it now, but when it is over I will tell you exactly what I said, and why I said it.'

Thomasin was perforce content.

'And you will keep the secret of my would-be marriage from Clym for the present?' she next asked.

'I have given my word to. But what is the use of it? He must soon know what has happened. A mere look at your face will show him that something is wrong.'

Thomasin turned and regarded her aunt from the tree. 'Now, hearken to me,' she said, her delicate voice expanding into firmness by a force which was other than physical. 'Tell him nothing. If he finds out that I am not worthy to be his cousin, let him. But, since he loved me once, we will not pain him by telling him my trouble too soon. The air is full of the story, I know; but gossips will not dare to speak of it to him for the first few days. His closeness to me is the very thing that will hinder the tale from reaching him early. If I am not made safe from sneers in a week or two I will tell him myself.'

The earnestness with which Thomasin spoke prevented further objections. Her aunt simply said, 'Very well. He should by rights have been told at the

time that the wedding was going to be. He will never forgive you for your secrecy.'

'Yes, he will, when he knows it was because I wished to spare him, and that I did not expect him home so soon. And you must not let me stand in the way of your Christmas party. Putting it off would only make matters worse.'

'Of course I shall not. I do not wish to show myself beaten before all Egdon, and the sport of a man like Wildeve. We have enough berries now, I think, and we had better take them home. By the time we have decked the house with this and hung up the mistletoe, we must think of starting to meet him.'

Thomasin came out of the tree, shook from her hair and dress the loose berries which had fallen thereon, and went down the hill with her aunt, each woman bearing half the gathered boughs. It was now nearly four o'clock, and the sunlight was leaving the vales. When the west grew red the two relatives came again from the house and plunged into the heath in a different direction from the first, towards a point in the distant highway along which the expected man was to return.

III. HOW A LITTLE SOUND PRODUCED A GREAT DREAM

EUSTACIA stood just within the heath, straining her eyes in the direction of Mrs. Yeobright's house and premises. No light, sound, or movement was perceptible there. The evening was chilly; the spot was dark and lonely. She inferred that the guest had not yet come; and after lingering ten or fifteen minutes she turned again towards home.

She had not far retraced her steps when sounds in front of her betokened the approach of persons in conversation along the same path. Soon their heads became visible against the sky. They were walking slowly; and though it was too dark for much discovery of character from aspect, the gait of them showed that they were not workers on the heath. Eustacia stepped a little out of the foot-track to let them pass. They were two women and a man; and the voices of the women were those of Mrs. Yeobright and Thomasin.

They went by her, and at the moment of passing appeared to discern her dusky form. There came to her ears in a masculine voice, 'Good night!'

She murmured a reply, glided by them, and turned round. She could not, for a moment, believe that chance, unrequested, had brought into her presence the soul of the house she had gone to inspect, the man without whom her inspection would not have been thought of.

She strained her eyes to see them, but was unable. Such was her intent-

ness, however, that it seemed as if her ears were performing the functions of seeing as well as hearing. This extension of power can almost be believed in at such moments. The deaf Dr. Kitto was probably under the influence of a parallel fancy when he described his body as having become, by long endeavour, so sensitive to vibrations that he had gained the power of perceiving by it as by ears.

She could follow every word that the rambles uttered. They were talking no secrets. They were merely indulging in the ordinary vivacious chat of relatives who have long been parted in person though not in soul. But it was not to the words that Eustacia listened; she could not even have recalled, a few minutes later, what the words were. It was to the alternating voice that gave out about one-tenth of them—the voice that had wished her good night. Sometimes this throat uttered Yes, sometimes it uttered No, sometimes it made inquiries about a timeworn denizen of the place. Once it surprised her notions by remarking upon the friendliness and geniality written in the faces of the hills around.

The three voices passed on, and decayed and died out upon her ear. Thus much had been granted her; and all besides withheld. No event could have been more exciting. During the greater part of the afternoon she had been entrancing herself by imagining the fascination which must attend a man come direct from beautiful Paris—laden with its atmosphere, familiar with its charms. And this man had greeted her.

With the departure of the figures the profuse articulations of the women wasted away from her memory; but the accents of the other stayed on. Was there anything in the voice of Mrs. Yeobright's son—for Clym it was—startling as a sound? No: it was simply comprehensive. All emotional things were possible to the speaker of that 'good night.' Eustacia's imagination supplied the rest—except the solution to one riddle. What *could* the tastes of that man be who saw friendliness and geniality in these shaggy hills?

On such occasions as this a thousand ideas pass through a highly charged woman's head; and they indicate themselves on her face; but the changes, though actual, are minute. Eustacia's features went through a rhythmical succession of them. She glowed; remembering the mendacity of the imagination, she flagged; then she freshened; then she fired; then she cooled again. It was a cycle of aspects, produced by a cycle of visions.

Eustacia entered her own house; she was excited. Her grandfather was enjoying himself over the fire, raking about the ashes and exposing the red-hot surface of the turves, so that their lurid glare irradiated the chimney-corner with the hues of a furnace.

'Why is it that we are never friendly with the Yeobrights?' she said, coming forward and stretching her soft hands over the warmth. 'I wish we were. They seem to be very nice people.'

'Be hanged if I know why,' said the captain. 'I liked the old man well enough, though he was as rough as a hedge. But you would never have cared to go there, even if you might have, I am well sure.'

'Why shouldn't I?'

'Your town tastes would find them far too countrified. They sit in the kitchen, drink mead and elder-wine, and sand the floor to keep it clean. A sensible way of life; but how would you like it?'

'I thought Mrs. Yeobright was a ladylike woman? A curate's daughter, was she not?'

'Yes; but she was obliged to live as her husband did; and I suppose she has taken kindly to it by this time. Ah, I recollect that I once accidentally offended her, and I have never seen her since.'

That night was an eventful one to Eustacia's brain, and one which she hardly ever forgot. She dreamt a dream; and few human beings, from Nebuchadnezzar to the Swaffham tinker, ever dreamed a more remarkable one. Such an elaborately developed, perplexing, exciting dream was certainly never dreamed by a girl in Eustacia's situation before. It had as many ramifications as the Cretan labyrinth, as many fluctuations as the Northern Lights, as much colour as a parterre in June, and was as crowded with figures as a coronation. To Queen Scheherazade the dream might have seemed not far removed from commonplace; and to a girl just returned from all the courts of Europe it might have seemed not more than interesting. But amid the circumstances of Eustacia's life it was as wonderful as a dream could be.

There was, however, gradually evolved from its transformation scenes a less extravagant episode, in which the heath dimly appeared behind the general brilliancy of the action. She was dancing to wondrous music, and her partner was the man in silver armour, who had accompanied her through the previous fantastic changes, the visor of his helmet being closed. The mazes of the dance were ecstatic. Soft whispering came into her ear from under the radiant helmet, and she felt like a woman in Paradise. Suddenly these two wheeled out from the mass of dancers, dived into one of the pools of the heath, and came out somewhere beneath into an iridescent hollow, arched with rainbows. 'It must be here,' said the voice by her side, and blushing looking up she saw him removing his casque to kiss her. At that moment there was a cracking noise, and his figure fell into fragments like a pack of cards.

She cried aloud, 'O that I had seen his face!'

Eustacia awoke. The cracking had been that of the window-shutter downstairs, which the maid-servant was opening to let in the day, now slowly increasing to Nature's meagre allowance at this sickly time of the year. 'O that I had seen his face!' she said again. 'Twas meant for Mr. Yeobright!'

When she became cooler she perceived that many of the phases of the dream had naturally arisen out of the images and fancies of the day before. But this detracted little from its interest, which lay in the excellent fuel it provided for newly kindled fervour. She was at the modulating point between indifference and love, at the stage called 'having a fancy for.' It

occurs once in the history of the most gigantic passions, and it is a period when they are in the hands of the weakest will.

The perfervid woman was by this time half in love with a vision. The fantastic nature of her passion, which lowered her as an intellect, raised her as a soul. If she had had a little more self-control she would have attenuated the emotion to nothing by sheer reasoning, and so have killed it off. If she had had a little less pride she might have gone and circumambulated the Yeobright's premises at Blooms-End at any maidenly sacrifice until she had seen him. But Eustacia did neither of these things. She acted as the most exemplary might have acted, being so influenced; she took an airing twice or thrice a day upon the Egdon hills, and kept her eyes employed.

The first occasion passed, and he did not come that way.

She promenaded a second time, and was again the sole wanderer there.

The third time there was a dense fog: she looked around, but without much hope. Even if he had been walking within twenty yards of her she could not have seen him.

At the fourth attempt to encounter him it began to rain in torrents, and she turned back.

The fifth sally was in the afternoon: it was fine, and she remained out long, walking to the very top of the valley in which Blooms-End lay. She saw the white paling about half a mile off; but he did not appear. It was almost with heart-sickness that she came home, and with a sense of shame at her weakness. She resolved to look for the man from Paris no more.

But Providence is nothing if not coquettish; and no sooner had Eustacia formed this resolve than the opportunity came which, while sought, had been entirely withholden.

IV. EUSTACIA IS LED ON TO AN ADVENTURE

IN the evening of this last day of expectation, which was the twenty-third of December, Eustacia was at home alone. She had passed the recent hour in lamenting over a rumour newly come to her ears—that Yeobright's visit to his mother was to be of short duration, and would end some time the next week. 'Naturally,' she said to herself. A man in the full swing of his activities in a gay city could not afford to linger long on Egdon Heath. That she would behold face to face the owner of the awakening voice within the limits of such a holiday was most unlikely, unless she were to haunt the environs of his mother's house like a robin, to do which was difficult and unseemly.

The customary expedient of provincial girls and men in such circumstances is churchgoing. In an ordinary village or country town one can safely calculate that, either on Christmas-day or the Sunday contiguous, any native home for the holidays, who has not through age or *ennui* lost the appetite for

seeing and being seen, will turn up in some pew or other, shining with hope, self-consciousness, and new clothes. Thus the congregation on Christmas morning is mostly a Tussaud collection of celebrities who have been born in the neighbourhood. Hither the mistress, left neglected at home all the year, can steal and observe the development of the returned lover who has forgotten her, and think as she watches him over her prayer-book that he may throb with a renewed fidelity when novelties have lost their charm. And hither a comparatively recent settler like Eustacia may betake herself to scrutinize the person of a native son who left home before her advent upon the scene, and consider if the friendship of his parents be worth cultivating during his next absence in order to secure a knowledge of him on his next return.

But these tender schemes were not feasible among the scattered inhabitants of Egdon Heath. In name they were parishioners, but virtually they belonged to no parish at all. People who came to these few isolated houses to keep Christmas with their friends remained in their friends' chimney-corners drinking mead and other comforting liquors till they left again for good and all. Rain, snow, ice, mud everywhere around, they did not care to trudge two or three miles to sit wet-footed and splashed to the nape of their necks among those who, though in some measure neighbours, lived close to the church, and entered it clean and dry. Eustacia knew it was ten to one that Clym Yeobright would go to no church at all during his few days of leave, and that it would be a waste of labour for her to go driving the pony and gig over a bad road in hope to see him there.

It was dusk, and she was sitting by the fire in the dining-room or hall, which they occupied at this time of the year in preference to the parlour, because of its large hearth, constructed for turf-fires, a fuel the captain was partial to in the winter season. The only visible articles in the room were those on the window-sill, which showed their shapes against the low sky: the middle article being the old hour-glass, and the other two a pair of ancient British urns which had been dug from a barrow near, and were used as flower-pots for two razor-leaved cactuses. Somebody knocked at the door. The servant was out; so was her grandfather. The person, after waiting a minute, came in and tapped at the door of the room.

'Who's there?' said Eustacia.

'Please, Cap'n Vye, will you let us——'

Eustacia arose and went to the door. 'I cannot allow you to come in so boldly. You should have waited.'

'The cap'n said I might come in without any fuss,' was answered in a lad's pleasant voice.

'Oh, did he?' said Eustacia, more gently. 'What do you want, Charley?'

'Please will your grandfather lend us his fuel-house to try over our parts in, to-night at seven o'clock?'

'What, are you one of the Egdon mummers for this year?'

'Yes, miss. The cap'n used to let the old mummers practise here.'

'I know it. Yes, you may use the fuel-house if you like,' said Eustacia languidly.

The choice of Captain Vye's fuel-house as the scene of rehearsal was dictated by the fact that his dwelling was nearly in the centre of the heath. The fuel-house was as roomy as a barn, and was a most desirable place for such a purpose. The lads who formed the company of players lived at different scattered points around, and by meeting in this spot the distances to be traversed by all the comers would be about equally proportioned.

Of mummers and mumming Eustacia had the greatest contempt. The mummers themselves were not afflicted with any such feeling for their art, though at the same time they were not enthusiastic. A traditional pastime is to be distinguished from a mere revival in no more striking feature than in this, that while in the revival all is excitement and fervour, the survival is carried on with a stolidity and absence of stir which sets one wondering why a thing that is done so perfunctorily should be kept up at all. Like Balaam and other unwilling prophets, the agents seem moved by an inner compulsion to say and do their allotted parts whether they will or no. This unweeting manner of performance is the true ring by which, in this refurbishing age, a fossilized survival may be known from a spurious reproduction.

The piece was the well-known play of 'Saint George,' and all who were behind the scenes assisted in the preparations, including the women of each household. Without the co-operation of sisters and sweethearts the dresses were likely to be a failure; but on the other hand, this class of assistance was not without its drawbacks. The girls could never be brought to respect tradition in designing and decorating the armour; they insisted on attaching loops and bows of silk and velvet in any situation pleasing to their taste. Gorget, gusset, basinet, cuirass, gauntlet, sleeve, all alike in the view of these feminine eyes were practicable spaces whereon to sew scraps of fluttering colour.

It might be that Joe, who fought on the side of Christendom, had a sweetheart, and that Jim, who fought on the side of the Moslem, had one likewise. During the making of the costumes it would come to the knowledge of Joe's sweetheart that Jim's was putting brilliant silk scallops at the bottom of her lover's surcoat, in addition to the ribbons of the visor, the bars of which, being invariably formed of coloured strips about half an inch wide hanging before the face, were mostly of that material. Joe's sweetheart straightway placed brilliant silk on the scallops of the hem in question, and, going a little further, added ribbon tufts to the shoulder-pieces. Jim's, not to be outdone, would affix bows and rosettes everywhere.

The result was that in the end the Valiant Soldier, of the Christian army, was distinguished by no peculiarity of accoutrement from the Turkish Knight; and what was worse, on a casual view Saint George himself might be mistaken for his deadly enemy, the Saracen. The guisers themselves, though inwardly regretting this confusion of persons, could not afford to offend those

by whose assistance they so largely profited, and the innovations were allowed to stand.

There was, it is true, a limit to this tendency to uniformity. The Leech or Doctor preserved his character intact: his darker habiliments, peculiar hat, and the bottle of physic slung under his arm, could never be mistaken. And the same might be said of the conventional figure of Father Christmas, with his gigantic club, an older man, who accompanied the band as general protector in long night journeys from parish to parish, and was bearer of the purse.

Seven o'clock, the hour of the rehearsal, came round, and in a short time Eustacia could hear voices in the fuel-house. To dissipate in some trifling measure her abiding sense of the murkiness of human life she went to the 'linhay' or lean-to shed, which formed the rootstore of their dwelling and abutted on the fuel-house. Here was a small rough hole in the mud wall, originally made for pigeons, through which the interior of the next shed could be viewed. A light came from it now; and Eustacia stepped upon a stool to look in upon the scene.

On a ledge in the fuel-house stood three tall rushlights, and by the light of them seven or eight lads were marching about, haranguing, and confusing each other, in endeavours to perfect themselves in the play. Humphrey and Sam, the furze and turf cutters, were there looking on; so also was Timothy Fairway, who leant against the wall and prompted the boys from memory, interspersing among the set words remarks and anecdotes of the superior days when he and others were the Egdon mummers-elect that these lads were now.

'Well, ye be as well up to it as ever ye will be,' he said. 'Not that such mumming would have passed in our time. Harry as the Saracen should strut a bit more, and John needn't holler his inside out. Beyond that perhaps you'll do. Have you got all your clothes ready?'

'We shall by Monday.'

'Your first outing will be Monday night, I suppose?'

'Yes. At Mrs. Yeobright's.'

'Oh, Mrs. Yeobright's. What makes her want to see ye? I should think a middle-aged woman was tired of mumming.'

'She's got up a bit of a party, because 'tis the first Christmas that her son Clym has been home for a long time.'

'To be sure, to be sure—her party! I am going myself. I almost forgot it, upon my life.'

Eustacia's face flagged. There was to be a party at the Yeobright's; she, naturally, had nothing to do with it. She was a stranger to all such local gatherings, and had always held them as scarcely appertaining to her sphere. But had she been going, what an opportunity would have been afforded her of seeing the man whose influence was penetrating her like summer sun! To increase that influence was coveted excitement; to cast it off might be to regain serenity; to leave it as it stood was tantalizing.

The lads and men prepared to leave the premises, and Eustacia returned to her fireside. She was immersed in thought, but not for long. In a few minutes the lad Charley, who had come to ask permission to use the place, returned with the key to the kitchen. Eustacia heard him, and opening the door into the passage said, 'Charley, come here.'

The lad was surprised. He entered the front room, not without blushing; for he, like many, had felt the power of this girl's face and form.

She pointed to a seat by the fire, and entered the other side of the chimney-corner herself. It could be seen in her face that whatever motive she might have had in asking the youth indoors would soon appear.

'Which part do you play, Charley—the Turkish Knight, do you not?' inquired the beauty, looking across the smoke of the fire to him on the other side.

'Yes, miss, the Turkish Knight,' he replied diffidently.

'Is yours a long part?'

'Nine speeches, about.'

'Can you repeat them to me? If so I should like to hear them.'

The lad smiled into the glowing turf and began—

'Here come I, a Turkish Knight,
Who learnt in Turkish land to fight,'

continuing the discourse throughout the scenes to the concluding catastrophe of his fall by the hand of Saint George.

Eustacia had occasionally heard the part recited before. When the lad ended she began, precisely in the same words, and ranted on without hitch or divergence till she too reached the end. It was the same thing, yet how different. Like in form, it had the added softness and finish of a Raffaele after Perugino, which, while faithfully reproducing the original subject, entirely distances the original art.

Charley's eyes rounded with surprise. 'Well, you be a clever lady!' he said, in admiration. 'I've been three weeks learning mine.'

'I have heard it before,' she quietly observed. 'Now, would you do anything to please me, Charley?'

'I'd do a good deal, miss.'

'Would you let me play your part for one night?'

'O, miss! But your woman's gown—you couldn't.'

'I can get boy's clothes—at least all that would be wanted besides the mumming dress. What should I have to give you to lend me your things, to let me take your place for an hour or two on Monday night, and on no account to say a word about who or what I am? You would, of course, have to excuse yourself from playing that night, and to say that somebody—a cousin of Miss Vye's—would act for you. The other mummers have never spoken to me in their lives, so that it would be safe enough; and if it were not, I should not mind. Now, what must I give you to agree to this? Half a crown?'

The youth shook his head.

'Five shillings?'

He shook his head again. 'Money won't do it,' he said, brushing the iron head of the fire-dog with the hollow of his hand

'What will, then, Charley?' said Eustacia in a disappointed tone.

'You know what you forbade me at the may-poling, miss,' murmured the lad, without looking at her, and still stroking the fire-dog's head.

'Yes,' said Eustacia, with a little more hauteur. 'You wanted to join hands with me in the ring, if I recollect?'

'Half an hour of that, and I'll agree, miss.'

Eustacia regarded the youth steadfastly. He was three years younger than herself, but apparently not backward for his age. 'Half an hour of what?' she said, though she guessed what.

'Holding your hand in mine.'

She was silent. 'Make it a quarter of an hour,' she said.

'Yes, Miss Eustacia—I will, if I may kiss it too. A quarter of an hour. And I'll swear to do the best I can to let you take my place without anybody knowing. Don't you think somebody might know your tongue, miss?'

'It is possible. But I will put a pebble in my mouth to make it less likely. Very well; you shall be allowed to have my hand as soon as you bring the dress and your sword and staff. I don't want you any longer now.'

Charley departed, and Eustacia felt more and more interest in life. Here was something to do: here was some one to see, and a charmingly adventurous way to see him. 'Ah,' she said to herself, 'want of an object to live for—that's all is the matter with me!'

Eustacia's manner was as a rule of a slumberous sort, her passions being of the massive rather than the vivacious kind. But when aroused she would make a dash which, just for the time, was not unlike the move of a naturally lively person.

On the question of recognition she was somewhat indifferent. By the acting lads themselves she was not likely to be known. With the guests who might be assembled she was hardly so secure. Yet detection, after all, would be no such dreadful thing. The fact only could be detected, her true motive never. It would be instantly set down as the passing freak of a girl whose ways were already considered singular. That she was doing for an earnest reason what would most naturally be done in jest was at any rate a safe secret.

The next evening Eustacia stood punctually at the fuel-house door, waiting for the dusk which was to bring Charley with the trappings. Her grandfather was at home to-night, and she would be unable to ask her confederate indoors.

He appeared on the dark ridge of heathland, like a fly on a negro, bearing the articles with him, and came up breathless with his walk.

'Here are the things,' he whispered, placing them upon the threshold. 'And now, Miss Eustacia——'

'The payment. It is quite ready. I am as good as my word.'

She leant against the door-post, and gave him her hand. Charley took it in both his own with a tenderness beyond description, unless it was like that of a child holding a captured sparrow.

'Why, there's a glove on it!' he said in a deprecating way.

'I have been walking,' she observed.

'But, miss!'

'Well—it is hardly fair.' She pulled off the glove, and gave him her bare hand.

They stood together minute after minute, without further speech, each looking at the blackening scene, and each thinking his and her own thoughts.

'I think I won't use it all up to-night,' said Charley devotedly, when six or eight minutes had been passed by him caressing her hand. 'May I have the other few minutes another time?'

'As you like,' said she without the least emotion. 'But it must be over in a week. Now, there is only one thing I want you to do: to wait while I put on the dress, and then to see if I do my part properly. But let me look first indoors.'

She vanished for a minute or two, and went in. Her grandfather was safely asleep in his chair. 'Now, then,' she said, on returning, 'walk down the garden a little way, and when I am ready I'll call you.'

Charley walked and waited, and presently heard a soft whistle. He returned to the fuel-house door.

'Did you whistle, Miss Vye?'

'Yes; come in,' reached him in Eustacia's voice from a back quarter. 'I must not strike a light till the door is shut, or it may be seen shining. Push your hat into the hole through to the wash-house, if you can feel your way across.'

Charley did as commanded, and she struck the light, revealing herself to be changed in sex, brilliant in colours, and armed from top to toe. Perhaps she quailed a little under Charley's vigorous gaze, but whether any shyness at her male attire appeared upon her countenance could not be seen by reason of the strips of ribbon which used to cover the face in mumming costumes, representing the barred visor of the mediæval helmet.

'It fits pretty well,' she said, looking down at the white overalls, 'except that the tunic, or whatever you call it, is long in the sleeve. The bottom of the overalls I can turn up inside. Now pay attention.'

Eustacia then proceeded in her delivery, striking the sword against the staff or lance at the minatory phrases, in the orthodox mumming manner, and strutting up and down. Charley seasoned his admiration with criticism of the gentlest kind, for the touch of Eustacia's hand yet remained with him.

'And now for your excuse to the others,' she said. 'Where do you meet before you go to Mrs. Yeobright's?'

'We thought of meeting here, miss, if you have nothing to say against it. At eight o'clock, so as to get there by nine.'

'Yes. Well, you of course must not appear. I will march in about five minutes late, ready-dressed, and tell them that you can't come. I have decided that the best plan will be for you to be sent somewhere by me, to make a real thing of the excuse. Our two heath-croppers are in the habit of straying into the meads, and to-morrow evening you can go and see if they are gone there. I'll manage the rest. Now you may leave me.'

'Yes, miss. But I think I'll have one minute more of what I am owed, if you don't mind.'

Eustacia gave him her hand as before.

'One minute,' she said, and counted on till she reached seven or eight minutes. Hand and person she then withdrew to a distance of several feet, and recovered some of her old dignity. The contract completed, she raised between them a barrier impenetrable as a wall.

'There, 'tis all gone; and I didn't mean quite all,' he said, with a sigh.

'You had good measure,' said she, turning away.

'Yes, miss. Well, 'tis over, and now I'll get home-along.'

V. THROUGH THE MOONLIGHT

THE next evening the mummers were assembled in the same spot, awaiting the entrance of the Turkish Knight.

'Twenty minutes after eight by the Quiet Woman, and Charley not come.'

'Ten minutes past by Blooms-End.'

'It wants ten minutes to, by Grandfer Cantle's watch.'

'And 'tis five minutes past by the captain's clock.'

On Egdon there was no absolute hour of the day. The time at any moment was a number of varying doctrines professed by the different hamlets, some of them having originally grown up from a common root, and then become divided by secession, some having been alien from the beginning. West Egdon believed in Blooms-End time, East Egdon in the time of the Quiet Woman Inn. Grandfer Cantle's watch had numbered many followers in years gone by, but since he had grown older faiths were shaken. Thus, the mummers having gathered hither from scattered points, each came with his own tenets on early and late; and they waited a little longer as a compromise.

Eustacia had watched the assemblage through the hole; and seeing that now was the proper moment to enter, she went from the 'linhay' and boldly pulled the bobbin of the fuel-house door. Her grandfather was safe at the Quiet Woman.

'Here's Charley at last! How late you be, Charley.'

''Tis not Charley,' said the Turkish Knight from within his visor. ''Tis a cousin of Miss Vye's, come to take Charley's place from curiosity. He was obliged to go and look for the heath-croppers that have got into the meads,

and I agreed to take his place, as he knew he couldn't come back here again to-night. I know the part as well as he.'

Her graceful gait, elegant figure, and dignified manner in general won the mummers to the opinion that they had gained by the exchange, if the new-comer were perfect in his part.

'It don't matter—if you be not too young,' said Saint George. Eustacia's voice had sounded somewhat more juvenile and fluty than Charley's.

'I know every word of it, I tell you,' said Eustacia decisively. Dash being all that was required to carry her triumphantly through, she adopted as much as was necessary. 'Go ahead, lads, with the try-over. I'll challenge any of you to find a mistake in me.'

The play was hastily rehearsed, whereupon the other mummers were delighted with the new knight. They extinguished the candles at half-past eight, and set out upon the heath in the direction of Mrs. Yeobright's house at Blooms-End.

There was a slight hoar-frost that night, and the moon, though not more than half full, threw a spirited and enticing brightness upon the fantastic figures of the mumming band, whose plumes and ribbons rustled in their walk like autumn leaves. Their path was not over Rainbarrow now, but down a valley which left that ancient elevation a little to the east. The bottom of the vale was green to a width of ten yards or thereabouts, and the shining facets of frost upon the blades of grass seemed to move on with the shadows of those they surrounded. The masses of furze and heath to the right and left were dark as ever; a mere half-moon was powerless to silver such sable features as theirs.

Half-an-hour of walking and talking brought them to the spot in the valley where the grass riband widened and led up to the front of the house. At sight of the place Eustacia, who had felt a few passing doubts during her walk with the youths, again was glad that the adventure had been undertaken. She had come out to see a man who might possibly have the power to deliver her soul from a most deadly oppression. What was Wildeve? Interesting, but inadequate. Perhaps she would see a sufficient hero to-night.

As they drew nearer to the front of the house the mummers became aware that music and dancing were briskly flourishing within. Every now and then a long low note from the serpent, which was the chief wind instrument played at these times, advanced further into the heath than the thin treble part, and reached their ears alone; and next a more than usually loud tread from a dancer would come the same way. With nearer approach these fragmentary sounds became pieced together, and were found to be the salient points of the tune called 'Nancy's Fancy.'

He was there, of course. Who was she that he danced with? Perhaps some unknown woman, far beneath herself in culture, was by that most subtle of lures sealing his fate this very instant. To dance with a man is to concentrate a twelvemonth's regulation fire upon him in the fragment of an hour. To pass to courtship without acquaintance, to pass to marriage without court-

ship, is a skipping of terms reserved for those alone who tread this royal road. She would see how his heart lay by keen observation of them all.

The enterprising lady followed the mumming company through the gate in the white paling, and stood before the open porch. The house was encrusted with heavy thatchings, which dropped between the upper windows: the front, upon which the moonbeams directly played, had originally been white; but a huge pyracanth now darkened the greater portion.

It became at once evident that the dance was proceeding immediately within the surface of the door, no apartment intervening. The brushing of skirts and elbows, sometimes the bumping of shoulders, could be heard against the very panels. Eustacia, though living within two miles of the place, had never seen the interior of this quaint old habitation. Between Captain Vye and the Yeobrights there had never existed much acquaintance, the former having come as a stranger and purchased the long-empty house at Mistover Knap not long before the death of Mrs. Yeobright's husband; and with that event and the departure of her son such friendship as had grown up became quite broken off.

'Is there no passage inside the door, then?' asked Eustacia as they stood within the porch.

'No,' said the lad who played the Saracen. 'The door opens right upon the front sitting-room, where the spree's going on.'

'So that we cannot open the door without stopping the dance.'

'That's it. Here we must bide till they have done, for they always bolt the back door after dark.'

'They won't be much longer,' said Father Christmas.

This assertion, however, was hardly borne out by the event. Again the instruments ended the tune; again they recommenced with as much fire and pathos as if it were the first strain. The air was now that one without any particular beginning, middle, or end, which perhaps, among all the dances which throng an inspired fiddler's fancy, best conveys the idea of the interminable—the celebrated 'Devil's Dream.' The fury of personal movement that was kindled by the fury of the notes could be approximately imagined by these outsiders under the moon, from the occasional kicks of toes and heels against the door, whenever the whirl round had been of more than customary velocity.

The first five minutes of listening was interesting enough to the mummers. The five minutes extended to ten minutes, and these to a quarter of an hour; but no signs of ceasing were audible in the lively Dream. The bumping against the door, the laughter, the stamping, were all as vigorous as ever, and the pleasure in being outside lessened considerably.

'Why does Mrs. Yeobright give parties of this sort?' Eustacia asked, a little surprised to hear merriment so pronounced.

'It is not one of her bettermost parlour-parties. She's asked the plain neighbours and workpeople without drawing any lines, just to give 'em a good supper and such like. Her son and she wait upon the folks.'

'I see,' said Eustacia.

'Tis the last strain, I think,' said Saint George, with his ear to the panel. 'A young man and woman have just swung into this corner, and he's saying to her, "Ah, the pity; 'tis over for us this time, my own."'

'Thank God,' said the Turkish Knight, stamping, and taking from the wall the conventional staff that each of the mummers carried. Her boots being thinner than those of the young men, the hoar had damped her feet and made them cold.

'Upon my song 'tis another ten minutes for us,' said the Valiant Soldier, looking through the keyhole as the tune modulated into another without stopping. 'Grandfer Cattle is standing in this corner, waiting his turn.'

'T'won't be long; 'tis a six-handed reel,' said the Doctor.

'Why not go in, dancing or no? They sent for us,' said the Saracen.

'Certainly not,' said Eustacia authoritatively, as she paced smartly up and down from door to gate to warm herself. 'We should burst into the middle of them and stop the dance, and that would be unmannerly.'

'He thinks himself somebody because he has had a bit more schooling than we,' said the Doctor.

'You may go to the deuce!' said Eustacia.

There was a whispered conversation between three or four of them, and one turned to her.

'Will you tell us one thing?' he said, not without gentleness. 'Be you Miss Vye? We think you must be.'

'You may think what you like,' said Eustacia slowly. 'But honourable lads will not tell tales upon a lady.'

'We'll say nothing, miss. That's upon our honour.'

'Thank you,' she replied.

At this moment the fiddles finished off with a screech, and the serpent emitted a last note that nearly lifted the roof. When, from the comparative quiet within, the mummers judged that the dancers had taken their seats, Father Christmas advanced, lifted the latch, and put his head inside the door.

'Ah, the mummers, the mummers!' cried several guests at once. 'Clear a space for the mummers.'

Hump-backed Father Christmas then made a complete entry, swinging his huge club, and in a general way clearing the stage for the actors proper, while he informed the company in smart verse that he was come, welcome or welcome not; concluding his speech with

'Make room, make room, my gallant boys,
And give us space to rhyme;
We've come to show Saint George's play,
Upon this Christmas time.'

The guests were now arranging themselves at one end of the room, the fiddler was mending a string, the serpent-player was emptying his mouth-

piece, and the play began. First of those outside the Valiant Soldier entered, in the interest of Saint George—

‘Here come I, the Valiant Soldier;
Slasher is my name;’

and so on. This speech concluded with a challenge to the infidel, at the end of which it was Eustacia’s duty to enter as the Turkish Knight. She, with the rest who were not yet on, had hitherto remained in the moonlight which streamed under the porch. With no apparent effort or backwardness she came in, beginning—

‘Here come I, a Turkish Knight,
Who learnt in Turkish land to fight;
I’ll fight this man with courage bold:
If his blood’s hot I’ll make it cold!’

During her declamation Eustacia held her head erect, and spoke as roughly as she could, feeling pretty secure from observation. But the concentration upon her part necessary to prevent discovery, the newness of the scene, the shine of the candles, and the confusing effect upon her vision of the ribboned visor which hid her features, left her absolutely unable to perceive who were present as spectators. On the further side of a table bearing candles she could faintly discern faces, and that was all.

Meanwhile Jim Starks as the Valiant Soldier had come forward, and, with a glare upon the Turk, replied—

‘If then, thou art that Turkish Knight,
Draw out thy sword, and let us fight!’

And fight they did; the issue of the combat being that the Valiant Soldier was slain by a preternaturally inadequate thrust from Eustacia, Jim, in his ardour for genuine histrionic art, coming down like a log upon the stone floor with force enough to dislocate his shoulder. Then, after more words from the Turkish Knight, rather too faintly delivered, and statements that he’d fight Saint George and all his crew, Saint George himself magnificently entered with the well-known flourish—

‘Here come I, Saint George, the valiant man,
With naked sword and spear in hand,
Who fought the dragon and brought him to the slaughter,
And by this won fair Sabra, the King of Egypt’s daughter;
What mortal man would dare to stand
Before me with my sword in hand?’

This was the lad who had first recognised Eustacia; and when she now, as the Turk, replied with suitable defiance, and at once began the combat, the young fellow took especial care to use his sword as gently as possible. Being wounded, the Knight fell upon one knee, according to the direction. The Doctor now entered, restored the Knight by giving him a draught from the

bottle which he carried, and the fight was again resumed, the Turk sinking by degrees until quite overcome—dying as hard in this venerable drama as he is said to do at the present day.

This gradual sinking to the earth was, in fact, one reason why Eustacia had thought that the part of the Turkish Knight, though not the shortest, would suit her best. A direct fall from upright to horizontal, which was the end of the other fighting characters, was not an elegant or decorous part for a girl. But it was easy to die like a Turk, by a dogged decline.

Eustacia was now among the number of the slain, though not on the floor, for she had managed to retire into a sitting position against the clock-case, so that her head was well elevated. The play proceeded between Saint George, the Saracen, the Doctor, and Father Christmas; and Eustacia, having no more to do, for the first time found leisure to observe the scene around, and to search for the form that had drawn her hither.

VI. THE TWO STAND FACE TO FACE

THE room had been arranged with a view to the dancing, the large oak table having been moved back till it stood as a breastwork to the fireplace. At each end, behind, and in the chimney-corner were grouped the guests, many of them being warm-faced and panting, among whom Eustacia cursorily recognized some well-to-do persons from beyond the heath. Thomasin, as she had expected, was not visible, and Eustacia recollected that a light had shone from an upper window when they were outside—the window, probably, of Thomasin's room. A nose, chin, hands, knees, and toes projected from the seat within the chimney opening, which members she found to unite in the person of Grandfer Cantle, Mrs. Yeobright's occasional assistant in the garden, and therefore one of the invited. The smoke went up from an Etna of turf in front of him, played round the notches of the chimney-crook, struck against the salt-box, and got lost among the flitches.

Another part of the room soon riveted her gaze. At the other side of the chimney stood the settle, which is the necessary supplement to a fire so open that nothing less than a strong breeze will carry up the smoke. It is, to the hearths of old-fashioned cavernous fireplaces, what the east belt of trees is to the exposed country estate, or the north wall to the garden. Outside the settle candles gutter, locks of hair wave, young women shiver, and old men sneeze. Inside is Paradise. Not a symptom of a draught disturbs the air; the sitters' backs are as warm as their faces, and songs and old tales are drawn from the occupants by the comfortable heat, like fruit from melon-plants in a frame.

It was, however, not with those who sat in the settle that Eustacia was concerned. A face showed itself with marked distinctness against the dark-tanned wood of the upper part. The owner, who was leaning against the settle's outer end, was Clement Yeobright, or Clym, as he was called here;

she knew it could be nobody else. The spectacle constituted an area of two feet in Rembrandt's intensest manner. A strange power in the lounge's appearance lay in the fact that, though his whole figure was visible, the observer's eye was only aware of his face.

To one of middle age the countenance was that of a young man, though a youth might hardly have seen any necessity for the term of immaturity. But it was really one of those faces which convey less the idea of so many years as its age than of so much experience as its store. The number of their years may have adequately summed up Jared, Mahalaleel, and the rest of the antediluvians, but the age of a modern man is to be measured by the intensity of his history.

The face was well shaped, even excellently. But the mind within was beginning to use it as a mere waste tablet whereon to trace its idiosyncrasies as they developed themselves. The beauty here visible would in no long time be ruthlessly overrun by its parasite, thought, which might just as well have fed upon a plainer exterior where there was nothing it could harm. Had Heaven preserved Yeobright from a wearing habit of meditation, people would have said, 'A handsome man.' Had his brain unfolded under sharper contours they would have said, 'A thoughtful man.' But an inner strenuousness was preying upon an outer symmetry, and they rated his look as singular.

Hence people who began by beholding him ended by perusing him. His countenance was overlaid with legible meanings. Without being thought-worn he yet had certain marks derived from a perception of his surroundings, such as are not unfrequently found on men at the end of the four or five years of endeavour which follow the close of placid pupillage. He already showed that thought is a disease of flesh, and indirectly bore evidence that ideal physical beauty is incompatible with emotional development and a full recognition of the coil of things. Mental luminousness must be fed with the oil of life, even though there is already a physical need for it; and the pitiful sight of two demands on one supply was just showing itself here.

When standing before certain men the philosopher regrets that thinkers are but perishable tissue, the artist that perishable tissue has to think. Thus to deplore, each from his point of view, the mutually destructive interdependence of spirit and flesh would have been instinctive with these in critically observing Yeobright.

As for his look, it was a natural cheerfulness striving against depression from without, and not quite succeeding. The look suggested isolation, but it revealed something more. As is usual with bright natures, the deity that lies ignominiously chained within an ephemeral human carcass shone out of him like a ray.

The effect upon Eustacia was palpable. The extraordinary pitch of excitement that she had reached beforehand would, indeed, have caused her to be influenced by the most commonplace man. She was troubled at Yeobright's presence.

The remainder of the play ended: the Saracen's head was cut off, and

Saint George stood as victor. Nobody commented, any more than they would have commented on the fact of mushrooms coming in autumn or snowdrops in spring. They took the piece as phlegmatically as did the actors themselves. It was a phase of cheerfulness which was, as a matter of course, to be passed through every Christmas; and there was no more to be said.

They sang the plaintive chant which follows the play, during which all the dead men rise to their feet in a silent and awful manner, like the ghosts of Napoleon's soldiers in the *Midnight Review*. Afterwards the door opened, and Fairway appeared on the threshold, accompanied by Christian and another. They had been waiting outside for the conclusion of the play, as the players had waited for the conclusion of the dance.

'Come in, come in,' said Mrs. Yeobright; and Clym went forward to welcome them. 'How is it you are so late? Grandfer Cantle has been here ever so long, and we thought you'd have come with him, as you live so near one another.'

'Well, I should have come earlier,' Mr. Fairway said, and paused to look along the beam of the ceiling for a nail to hang his hat on; but, finding his accustomed one to be occupied by the mistletoe, and all the nails in the walls to be burdened with bunches of holly, he at last relieved himself of the hat by ticklishly balancing it between the candle-box and the head of the clock-case. 'I should have come, earlier, ma'am,' he resumed, with a more composed air, 'but I know what parties be, and how there's none too much room in folks' houses at such times, so I thought I wouldn't come till you'd get settled a bit.'

'And I thought so too, Mrs. Yeobright,' said Christian earnestly; 'but father there was so eager that he had no manners at all, and left home almost afore 'twas dark. I told him 'twas barely decent in a' old man to come so oversoon; but words be wind.'

'Kik! I wasn't going to bide waiting about till half the game was over! I'm as light as a kite when anything's going on!' crowed Grandfer Cantle from the chimney-seat.

Fairway had meanwhile concluded a critical gaze at Yeobright. 'Now, you may not believe it,' he said to the rest of the room, 'but I should never have knowed this gentleman if I had met him anywhere off his own he'th: he's altered so much.'

'You too have altered, and for the better, I think, Timothy,' said Yeobright, surveying the firm figure of Fairway.

'Master Yeobright, look me over too. I have altered for the better, haven't I, hey?' said Grandfer Cantle, rising, and placing himself something above half an inch from Clym's eye, to induce the most searching criticism.

'To be sure we will,' said Fairway, taking the candle and moving it over the surface of the Grandfer's countenance, the subject of his scrutiny irradiating himself with light and pleasant smiles, and giving himself jerks of juvenility.

'You haven't changed much,' said Yeobright.

'If there's any difference, Grandfer is younger,' appended Fairway decisively.

'And yet not my own doing, and I feel no pride in it,' said the pleased ancient. 'But I can't be cured of my vagaries; them I plead guilty to. Yes, Master Cantle always was that, as we know. But I am nothing by the side of you, Mister Clym.'

'Nor any o' us,' said Humphrey, in a low rich tone of admiration, not intended to reach anybody's ears.

'Really, there would have been nobody here who could have stood as decent second to him, or even third, if I hadn't been a soldier in the Bang-up Locals (as we was called for our smartness),' said Grandfer Cantle. 'And even as 'tis we all look a little scammish beside him. But in the year four 'twas said there wasn't a finer figure in the whole South Wessex than I, as I looked when dashing past the shop-windows with the rest of our company on the day we ran out o' Budmouth because it was thoughted that Boney had landed round the point. There was I, straight as a young poplar, wi' my firelock, and my bagnet, and my spatterdashes, and my stock sawing my jaws off, and my accoutrements sheening like the seven stars! Yes, neighbours, I was a pretty sight in my soldiering days. You ought to have seen me in four!'

''Tis his mother's side where Master Clym's figure comes from, bless ye,' said Timothy. 'I know'd her brothers well. Longer coffins were never made in the whole country of Wessex, and 'tis said that poor George's knees were crumpled up a little e'en as 'twas.'

'Coffins, where?' inquired Christian, drawing nearer. 'Have the ghost of one appeared to anybody, Master Fairway?'

'No, no. Don't let your mind so mislead your ears, Christian; and be a man,' said Timothy reproachfully.

'I will,' said Christian. 'But now I think o't my shadder last night seemed just the shape of a coffin. What is it a sign of when your shade's like a coffin, neighbours? It can't be nothing to be afeard of, I suppose?'

'Afeard, no!' said the Grandfer. 'Faith, I was never afeard of nothing except Boney, or I shouldn't ha' been the soldier I was. Yes, 'tis a thousand pities you didn't see me in four!'

By this time the mummers were preparing to leave; but Mrs. Yeobright stopped them by asking them to sit down and have a little supper. To this invitation Father Christmas, in the name of them all, readily agreed.

Eustacia was happy in the opportunity of staying a little longer. The cold and frosty night without was doubly frigid to her. But the lingering was not without its difficulties. Mrs. Yeobright, for want of room in the larger apartment, placed a bench for the mummers immediately inside the pantry-door, which opened from the sitting-room. Here they seated themselves in a row, the door being left open: thus they were still virtually in the same apartment. Mrs. Yeobright now murmured a few words to her son, who crossed the room to the pantry, striking his head against the mistletoe as he passed, and

brought the mummers beef and bread, cake, pastry, mead, and elder-wine, the waiting being done by him and his mother, that the little maid-servant might sit as guest. The mummers doffed their helmets, and began to eat and drink.

'But you will surely have some?' said Clym to the Turkish Knight, as he stood before that warrior, tray in hand. She had refused, and still sat covered, only the sparkle of her eyes being visible between the ribbons which covered her face.

'None, thank you,' replied Eustacia.

'He's quite a youngster,' said the Saracen apologetically, 'and you must excuse him. He's not one of the old set, but have joined us because t'other couldn't come.'

'But he will take something?' persisted Yeobright. 'Try a glass of mead or elder-wine.'

'Yes, you had better try that,' said the Saracen. 'It will keep the cold out going home-along.'

Though Eustacia could not eat without uncovering her face she could drink easily enough beneath her disguise. The elder-wine was accordingly accepted, and the glass vanished inside the ribbons.

At moments during this performance Eustacia was half in doubt about the security of her position; yet it had a fearful joy. A series of attentions paid to her, and yet not to her but to some imaginary person, by the first man she had ever been inclined to adore, complicated her emotions indescribably. She had loved him partly because he was exceptional in this scene, partly because she had determined to love him, chiefly because she was in desperate need of loving somebody after wearying of Wildeva. Believing that she must love him in spite of herself, she had been influenced after the fashion of the second Lord Lyttleton and other persons, who have dreamed that they were to die on a certain day, and by stress of a morbid imagination have actually brought about that event. Once let a maiden admit the possibility of her being stricken with love for some one at a certain hour and place, and the thing is as good as done.

Did anything at this moment suggest to Yeobright the sex of the creature whom that fantastic guise inclosed, how extended was her scope both in feeling and in making others feel, and how far her compass transcended that of her companions in the band? When the disguised Queen of Love appeared before Æneas a preternatural perfume accompanied her presence and betrayed her quality. If such a mysterious emanation ever was projected by the emotions of an earthly woman upon their object, it must have signified Eustacia's presence of Yeobright now. He looked at her wistfully, then seemed to fall into a reverie, as if he were forgetting what he observed. The momentary situation ended, he passed on, and Eustacia sipped her wine without knowing what she drank. The man for whom she had predetermined to nourish a passion went into the small room, and across it to the further extremity.

The mummers, as has been stated, were seated on a bench, one end of which extended into the small apartment, or pantry, for want of space in the outer room. Eustacia, partly from shyness, had chosen the innermost seat, which thus commanded a view of the interior of the pantry as well as the room containing the guests. When Clym passed down the pantry her eyes followed him in the gloom which prevailed there. At the remote end was a door which, just as he was about to open it for himself, was opened by somebody within; and light streamed forth.

The person was Thomasin, with a candle, looking anxious, pale, and interesting. Yeobright appeared glad to see her, and pressed her hand. 'That's right, Tamsie,' he said heartily, as though recalled to himself by the sight of her: 'you have decided to come down. I am glad of it.'

'Hush—no, no,' she said quickly. 'I only came to speak to you.'

'But why not join us?'

'I cannot. At least I would rather not. I am not well enough, and we shall have plenty of time together now you are going to be home a good long holiday.'

'It isn't nearly so pleasant without you. Are you really ill?'

'Just a little, my old cousin—here,' she said, playfully sweeping her hand across her heart.

'Ah, mother should have asked somebody else to be present to-night, perhaps?'

'O no, indeed. I merely stepped down, Clym, to ask you——' Here he followed her through the doorway into the private room beyond, and, the door closing, Eustacia and the mummer who sat next to her, the only other witness of the performance, saw and heard no more.

The heat flew to Eustacia's head and cheeks. She instantly guessed that Clym, having been home only these two or three days, had not as yet been made acquainted with Thomasin's painful situation with regard to Wildevie; and seeing her living there just as she had been living before he left home, he naturally suspected nothing. Eustacia felt a wild jealousy of Thomasin on the instant. Though Thomasin might possibly have tender sentiments towards another man as yet, how long could they be expected to last when she was shut up here with this interesting and travelled cousin of hers? There was no knowing what affection might not soon break out between the two, so constantly in each other's society, and not a distracting object near. Clym's boyish love for her might have languished, but it might easily be revived again.

Eustacia was nettled by her own contrivances. What a sheer waste of herself to be dressed thus while another was shining to advantage! Had she known the full effect of the encounter she would have moved heaven and earth to get here in a natural manner. The power of her face all lost, the charm of her emotions all disguised, the fascinations of her coquetry denied existence, nothing but a voice left to her: she had a sense of the doom of Echo. 'Nobody here respects me,' she said. She had overlooked the fact that,

in coming as a boy among other boys, she would be treated as a boy. The slight, though of her own causing, and self-explanatory, she was unable to dismiss as unwittingly shown, so sensitive had the situation made her.

Women have done much for themselves in histrionic dress. To look far below those who, like a certain fair personator of Polly Peachum early in the last century, and another of Lydia Languish early in this, have won not only love but ducal coronets into the bargain, whole shoals of them have reached to the initial satisfaction of getting love almost whence they would. But the Turkish Knight was denied even the chance of achieving his by the fluttering ribbons which she dared not brush aside.

Yeobright returned to the room without his cousin. When within two or three feet of Eustacia he stopped, as if again arrested by a thought. He was gazing at her. She looked another way, disconcerted, and wondered how long this purgatory was to last. After lingering a few seconds he passed on again.

To court their own discomfiture by love is a common instinct with certain perfervid women. Conflicting sensations of love, fear, and shame reduced Eustacia to a state of the utmost uneasiness. To escape was her great and immediate desire. The other mummers appeared to be in no hurry to leave; and murmuring to the lad who sat next to her that she preferred waiting for them outside the house, she moved to the door as imperceptibly as possible, opened it, and slipped out.

The calm, lone scene reassured her. She went forward to the palings and leant over them, looking at the moon. She had stood thus but a little time when the door again opened. Expecting to see the remainder of the band Eustacia turned; but no—Clym Yeobright came out as softly as she had done, and closed the door behind him.

He advanced and stood beside her. 'I have an odd opinion,' he said, 'and should like to ask you a question. Are you a woman—or am I wrong?'

'I am a woman.'

His eyes lingered on her with great interest. 'Do girls often play as mummers now? They never used to.'

'They don't now.'

'Why did you?'

'To get excitement and shake off depression,' she said in low tones.

'What depressed you?'

'Life.'

'That's a cause of depression a good many have to put up with.'

'Yes.'

A long silence. 'And do you find excitement?' asked Clym at last.

'At this moment, perhaps.'

'Then you are vexed at being discovered?'

'Yes; though I thought I might be.'

'I would gladly have asked you to our party had I known you wished to come. Have I ever been acquainted with you in my youth?'

'Never.'

'Won't you come in again, and stay as long as you like?'

'No. I wish not to be further recognized.'

'Well, you are safe with me.' After remaining in thought a minute he added gently, 'I will not intrude upon you longer. It is a strange way of meeting, and I will not ask why I find a cultivated woman playing such a part as this.'

She did not volunteer the reason which he seemed to hope for, and he wished her good night, going thence round to the back of the house, where he walked up and down by himself for some time before re-entering.

Eustacia, warmed with an inner fire, could not wait for her companions after this. She flung back the ribbons from her face, opened the gate, and at once struck into the heath. She did not hasten along. Her grandfather was in bed at this hour, for she so frequently walked upon the hills on moonlight nights that he took no notice of her comings and goings, and, enjoying himself in his own way, left her to do likewise. A more important subject than that of getting indoors now engrossed her. Yeobright, if he had the least curiosity, would infallibly discover her name. What then? She first felt a sort of exultation at the way in which the adventure had terminated, even though at moments between her exultations she was abashed and blushful. Then this consideration recurred to chill her: What was the use of her exploit? She was at present a total stranger to the Yeobright family. The unreasonable nimbus of romance with which she had encircled that man might be her misery. How could she allow herself to become so infatuated with a stranger? And to fill the cup of her sorrow there would be Thomasin, living day after day in inflammable proximity to him; for she had just learnt that, contrary to her first belief, he was going to stay at home some considerable time.

She reached the wicket at Mistover Knap, but before opening it she turned and faced the heath once more. The form of Rainbarrow stood above the hills, and the moon stood above Rainbarrow. The air was charged with silence and frost. The scene reminded Eustacia of a circumstance which till that moment she had totally forgotten. She had promised to meet Wildeve by the Barrow this very night at eight, to give a final answer to his pleading for an elopement.

She herself had fixed the evening and the hour. He had probably come to the spot, waited there in the cold, and been greatly disappointed.

'Well, so much the better: it did not hurt him,' she said serenely. Wildeve had at present the rayless outline of the sun through smoked glass, and she could say such things as that with the greatest facility.

She remained deeply pondering; and Thomasin's winning manner towards her cousin arose again upon Eustacia's mind.

'O that she had been married to Damon before this!' she said. 'And she would if it hadn't been for me! If I had only known—if I had only known!'

Eustacia once more lifted her deep stormy eyes to the moonlight, and,

sighing that tragic sigh of hers which was so much like a shudder, entered the shadow of the roof. She threw off her trappings in the out-house, rolled them up, and went indoors to her chamber.

VII. A COALITION BETWEEN BEAUTY AND ODDNESS

THE old captain's prevailing indifference to his grand-daughter's movements left her free as a bird to follow her own courses; but it so happened that he did take upon himself the next morning to ask her why she had walked out so late.

'Only in search of events, grandfather,' she said, looking out of the window with that drowsy latency of manner which discovered so much force behind it whenever the trigger was pressed.

'Search of events—one would think you were one of the bucks I knew at one and twenty.'

'It is so lonely here.'

'So much the better. If I were living in a town my whole time would be taken up in looking after you. I fully expected you would have been home when I returned from the Woman.'

'I won't conceal what I did. I wanted an adventure, and I went with the mummers. I played the part of the Turkish Knight.'

'No, never? Ha, ha! Good gad! I didn't expect it of you, Eustacia.'

'It was my first performance, and it certainly will be my last. Now I have told you—and remember it is a secret.'

'Of course. But, Eustacia, you never did—ha! ha! Dammy, how 'twould have pleased me forty years ago! But remember, no more of it, my girl. You may walk on the heath night or day, as you choose, so that you don't bother me; but no figuring in breeches again.'

'You need have no fear for me, grandpapa.'

Here the conversation ceased, Eustacia's moral training never exceeding in severity a dialogue of this sort, which, if it ever became profitable to good works, would be a result not dear at the price. But her thoughts soon strayed far from her own personality; and, full of a passionate and indescribable solicitude for one to whom she was not even a name, she went forth into the amplitude of tanned wild around her, restless as Ahasuerus the Jew. She was about half a mile from her residence when she beheld a sinister redness arising from a ravine a little way in advance—dull and lurid like a flame in sunlight, and she guessed it to signify Diggory Venn.

When the farmers who had wished to buy in a new stock of reddle during the last month had inquired where Venn was to be found, people replied, 'On Egdon Heath.' Day after day the answer was the same. Now, since Egdon was populated with heath-croppers and furze-cutters rather than with sheep and shepherds, and the downs where most of the latter were to

be found lay some to the north, some to the west of Egdon, his reason for camping about there like Israel in Zin was not apparent. The position was central and occasionally desirable. But the sale of reddle was not Diggory's primary object in remaining on the heath, particularly at so late a period of the year, when most travellers of his class had gone into winter quarters.

Eustacia looked at the lonely man. Wildevé had told her at their last meeting that Venn had been thrust forward by Mrs. Yeobright as one ready and anxious to take his place as Thomasin's betrothed. His figure was perfect, his face young and well outlined, his eye bright, his intelligence keen, and his position one which he could readily better if he chose. But in spite of possibilities it was not likely that Thomasin would accept this Ishmaelish creature while she had a cousin like Yeobright at her elbow, and Wildevé at the same time not absolutely indifferent. Eustacia was not long in guessing that poor Mrs. Yeobright, in her anxiety for her niece's future, had mentioned this lover to stimulate the zeal of the other. Eustacia was on the side of the Yeobrights now, and entered into the spirit of the aunt's desire.

'Good morning, miss,' said the reddleman taking off his cap of hareskin, and apparently bearing her no ill-will from recollection of their last meeting.

'Good morning, reddleman,' she said, hardly troubling to lift her heavily shaded eyes to his. 'I did not know you were so near. Is your van here, too?'

Venn moved his elbow towards a hollow in which a dense brake of purple-stemmed brambles had grown to such vast dimensions as almost to form a dell. Brambles, though churlish when handled, are kindly shelter in early winter, being the latest of the deciduous bushes to lose their leaves. The roof and chimney of Venn's caravan showed behind the tracery and tangles of the brake.

'You remain near this part?' she asked with more interest.

'Yes, I have business here.'

'Not altogether the selling of reddle?'

'It has nothing to do with that.'

'It has to do with Miss Yeobright?'

Her face seemed to ask for an armed peace, and he therefore said frankly, 'Yes, miss; it is on account of her.'

'On account of your approaching marriage with her?'

Venn flushed through his stain. 'Don't make sport of me, Miss Vye,' he said.

'It isn't true?'

'Certainly not.'

She was thus convinced that the reddleman was a mere *pis aller* in Mrs. Yeobright's mind; one, moreover, who had not even been informed of his promotion to that lowly standing. 'It was a mere notion of mine,' she said quietly; and was about to pass by without further speech, when, looking round to the right, she saw a painfully well-known figure serpentineing upwards by one of the little paths which led to the top where she stood. Owing

to the necessary windings of his course his back was at present towards them. She glanced quickly round; to escape that man there was only one way. Turning to Venn, she said, 'Would you allow me to rest a few minutes in your van? The banks are damp for sitting on.'

'Certainly, miss; I'll make a place for you.'

She followed him behind the dell of brambles to his wheeled dwelling, into which Venn mounted, placing the three-legged stool just within the door.

'That is the best I can do for you,' he said, stepping down and retiring to the path, where he resumed the smoking of his pipe as he walked up and down.

Eustacia bounded into the vehicle and sat on the stool, ensconced from view on the side towards the trackway. Soon she heard the brushing of other feet than the reddleman's, a not very friendly 'Good day' uttered by two men in passing each other, and then the dwindling of the footfall of one of them in a direction onwards. Eustacia stretched her neck forward till she caught a glimpse of a receding back and shoulders; and she felt a wretched twinge of misery, she knew not why. It was the sickening feeling which, if the changed heart has any generosity at all in its composition, accompanies the sudden sight of a once-loved one who is beloved no more.

When Eustacia descended to proceed on her way the reddleman came near. 'That was Mr. Wildeve who passed, miss,' he said slowly, and expressed by his face that he expected her to feel vexed at having been sitting unseen.

'Yes, I saw him coming up the hill,' replied Eustacia. 'Why should you tell me that?' It was a bold question, considering the reddleman's knowledge of her past love; but her undemonstrative manner had power to repress the opinions of those she deemed remote from her.

'I am glad to hear that you can ask it,' said the reddleman bluntly. 'And, now I think of it, it agrees with what I saw last night.'

'Ah—what was that?' Eustacia wished to leave him, but wished to know.

'Mr. Wildeve stayed at Rainbarrow a long time waiting for a lady who didn't come.'

'You waited too, it seems?'

'Yes, I always do. I was glad to see him disappointed. He will be there again to-night.'

'To be again disappointed. The truth is, reddleman, that that lady, so far from wishing to stand in the way of Thomasin's marriage with Mr. Wildeve, would be very glad to promote it.'

Venn felt much astonishment at this avowal, though he did not show it clearly; that exhibition may greet remarks which are one remove from expectation, but it is usually withheld in complicated cases of two removes and upwards. 'Indeed, miss,' he replied.

'How do you know that Mr. Wildeve will come to Rainbarrow again to-night?' she asked.

'I heard him say to himself that he would. He's in a regular temper.'

Eustacia looked for a moment what she felt, and she murmured, lifting her deep dark eyes anxiously to his, 'I wish I knew what to do. I don't want to be uncivil to him; but I don't wish to see him again; and I have some few little things to return to him.'

'If you choose to send 'em by me, miss, and a note to tell him that you wish to say no more to him, I'll take it for you quite privately. That would be the most straightforward way of letting him know your mind.'

'Very well,' said Eustacia. 'Come towards my house, and I will bring it out to you'

She went on, and as the path was an infinitely small parting in the shaggy locks of the heath, the reddleman followed exactly in her trail. She saw from a distance that the captain was on the bank sweeping the horizon with his telescope; and bidding Venn to wait where he stood, she entered the house alone.

In ten minutes she returned with a parcel and a note, and said, in placing them in his hand, 'Why are you so ready to take these for me?'

'Can you ask that?'

'I suppose you think to serve Thomasin in some way by it. Are you as anxious as ever to help on her marriage?'

Venn was a little moved. 'I would sooner have married her myself,' he said in a low voice. 'But what I feel is that if she cannot be happy without him I will do my duty in helping her to get him, as a man ought.'

Eustacia looked curiously at the singular man who spoke thus. What a strange sort of love, to be entirely free from that quality of selfishness which is frequently the chief constituent of the passion, and sometimes its only one! The reddleman's disinterestedness was so well deserving of respect that it overshot respect by being barely comprehended; and she almost thought it absurd.

'Then we are both of one mind at last,' she said.

'Yes,' replied Venn gloomily. 'But if you would tell me, miss, why you take such an interest in her, I should be easier. It is so sudden and strange.'

Eustacia appeared at a loss. 'I cannot tell you that, reddleman,' she said coldly.

Venn said no more. He pocketed the letter, and, bowing to Eustacia, went away.

Rainbarrow had again become blended with night when Wildeve ascended the long acclivity at its base. On his reaching the top a shape grew up from the earth immediately behind him. It was that of Eustacia's emissary. He slapped Wildeve on the shoulder. The feverish young innkeeper and ex-engineer started like Satan at the touch of Ithuriel's spear.

'The meeting is always at eight o'clock, at this place,' said Venn, 'and here we are—we three.'

'We three?' said Wildeve, looking quickly round.

'Yes; you, and I, and she. This is she.' He held up the letter and parcel.

Wildev took them wonderingly. 'I don't quite see what this means,' he said. 'How do you come here? There must be some mistake.'

'It will be cleared from your mind when you have read the letter. Lanterns for one.' The reddleman struck a light, kindled an inch of tallow-candle which he had brought, and sheltered it with his cap.

'Who are you?' said Wildev, discerning by the candle-light an obscure rubicundity of person in his companion. 'You are the reddleman I saw on the hill this morning—why, you are the man who——'

'Please read the letter.'

'If you had come from the other one I shouldn't have been surprised,' murmured Wildev as he opened the letter and read. His face grew serious.

'To Mr. WILDEV.

'After some thought I have decided once and for all that we must hold no further communication. The more I consider the matter the more I am convinced that there must be an end to our acquaintance. Had you been uniformly faithful to me throughout these two years you might now have some ground for accusing me of heartlessness; but if you calmly consider what I bore during the period of your desertion, and how I passively put up with your courtship of another without once interfering, you will, I think, own that I have a right to consult my own feelings when you come back to me again. That these are not what they were towards you may, perhaps, be a fault in me, but it is one which you can scarcely reproach me for when you remember how you left me for Thomasin.

'The little articles you gave me in the early part of our friendship are returned by the bearer of this letter. They should rightly have been sent back when I first heard of your engagement to her.

'EUSTACIA.'

By the time that Wildev reached her name the blankness with which he had read the first half of the letter intensified to mortification. 'I am made a great fool of, one way and another,' he said pettishly. 'Do you know what is in this letter?'

The reddleman hummed a tune.

'Can't you answer me?' asked Wildev warmly.

'Ru-um-tum-tum,' sang the reddleman.

Wildev stood looking on the ground beside Venn's feet, till he allowed his eyes to travel upwards over Diggory's form, as illuminated by the candle, to his head and face. 'Ha-ha! Well, I suppose I deserve it, considering how I have played with them both,' he said at last, as much to himself as to Venn. 'But of all the odd things that ever I knew, the oddest is that you should so run counter to your own interests as to bring this to me.'

'My interests?'

'Certainly. 'Twas your interest not to do anything which would send me courting Thomasin again, now she has accepted you—or something like it. Mrs. Yeobright says you are to marry her. 'Tisn't true, then?'

'Good Lord! I heard of this before, but didn't believe it. When did she say so?'

Wildevé began humming as the reddleman had done.

'I don't believe it now,' cried Venn.

'Ru-um-tum-tum,' sang Wildevé.

'O Lord—how we can imitate!' said Venn contemptuously. 'I'll have this out. I'll go straight to her.'

Diggory withdrew with an emphatic step, Wildevé's eye passing over his form in withering derision, as if he were no more than a heath-cropper. When the reddleman's figure could no longer be seen, Wildevé himself descended and plunged into the rayless hollow of the vale.

To lose the two women—he who had been the well-beloved of both—was too ironical an issue to be endured. He could only decently save himself by Thomasin; and once he became her husband, Eustacia's repentance, he thought, would set in for a long and bitter term. It was no wonder that Wildevé, ignorant of the new man at the back of the scene, should have supposed Eustacia to be playing a part. To believe that the letter was not the result of some momentary pique, to infer that she really gave him up to Thomasin, would have required previous knowledge of her transfiguration by that man's influence. Who was to know that she had grown generous in the greediness of a new passion, that in coveting one cousin she was dealing liberally with another, that in her eagerness to appropriate she gave way?

Full of this resolve to marry in haste, and wring the heart of the proud girl, Wildevé went his way.

Meanwhile Diggory Venn had returned to his van, where he stood looking thoughtfully into the stove. A new vista was opened up to him. But, however promising Mrs Yeobright's views of him might be as a candidate for her niece's hand, one condition was indispensable to the favour of Thomasin herself, and that was a renunciation of his present wild mode of life. In this he saw little difficulty.

He could not afford to wait till the next day before seeing Thomasin and detailing his plan. He speedily plunged himself into toilet operations, pulled a suit of cloth clothes from a box, and in about twenty minutes stood before the van-lantern as a reddleman in nothing but his face, the vermilion shades of which were not to be removed in a day. Closing the door and fastening it with a padlock Venn set off towards Blooms-End.

He had reached the white palings and laid his hand upon the gate when the door of the house opened, and quickly closed again. A female form had glided in. At the same time a man, who had seemingly been standing with the woman in the porch, came forward from the house till he was face to face with Venn. It was Wildevé again.

'Man alive, you've been quick at it,' said Diggory sarcastically.

'And you slow, as you will find,' said Wildevé. 'And,' lowering his voice, 'you may as well go back again now. I've claimed her, and got her. Good night, reddleman!' Thereupon Wildevé walked away.

Venn's heart sank within him, though it had not risen unduly high. He stood leaning over the palings in an indecisive mood for nearly a quarter of an hour. Then he went up the garden-path, knocked, and asked for Mrs. Yeobright.

Instead of requesting him to enter, she came to the porch. A discourse was carried on between them in low measured tones for the space of ten minutes or more. At the end of the time Mrs. Yeobright went in, and Venn sadly retraced his steps into the heath. When he had again regained his van he lit the lantern, and with an apathetic face at once began to pull off his best clothes, till in the course of a few minutes he reappeared as the confirmed and irretrievable reddleman that he had seemed before.

VIII. FIRMNESS IS DISCOVERED IN A GENTLE HEART

ON that evening the interior of Blooms-End, though cosy and comfortable, had been rather silent. Clym Yeobright was not at home. Since the Christmas party he had gone on a few days' visit to a friend about ten miles off.

The shadowy form seen by Venn to part from Wildevé in the porch, and quickly withdraw into the house, was Thomasin's. On entering she threw down a cloak which had been carelessly wrapped round her, and came forward to the light, where Mrs. Yeobright sat at her work-table, drawn up within the settle, so that part of it projected into the chimney-corner.

'I don't like your going out after dark alone, Tamsin,' said her aunt quietly, without looking up from her work.

'I have only been just outside the door.'

'Well?' inquired Mrs. Yeobright, struck by a change in the tone of Thomasin's voice, and observing her. Thomasin's cheek was flushed to a pitch far beyond that which it had reached before her troubles, and her eyes glittered.

'It was *he* who knocked,' she said.

'I thought as much.'

'He wishes the marriage to be at once.'

'Indeed! What—is he anxious?' Mrs. Yeobright directed a searching look upon her niece. 'Why did not Mr. Wildevé come in?'

'He did not wish to. You are not friends with him, he says. He would like the wedding to be the day after to-morrow, quite privately; at the church of his parish—not at ours.'

'Oh! And what did you say?'

'I agreed to it,' Thomasin answered firmly. 'I am a practical woman now. I don't believe in hearts at all. I would marry him under any circumstances since—since Clym's letter.'

A letter was lying on Mrs. Yeobright's work-basket, and at Thomasin's words her aunt reopened it, and silently read for the tenth time that day:—

'What is the meaning of this silly story that people are circulating about Thomasin and Mr. Wildeve? I should call such a scandal humiliating if there was the least chance of its being true. How could such a gross falsehood have arisen? It is said that one should go abroad to hear news of home, and I appear to have done it. Of course I contradict the tale everywhere; but it is very vexing, and I wonder how it could have originated. It is too ridiculous that such a girl as Thomasin could so mortify us as to get jilted on the wedding-day. What has she done?'

'Yes,' Mrs. Yeobright said sadly, putting down the letter. 'If you think you can marry him, do so. And since Mr. Wildeve wishes it to be unceremonious, let it be that too. I can do nothing. It is all in your own hands now. My power over your welfare came to an end when you left this house to go with him to Budmouth.' She continued, half in bitterness, 'I may almost ask, why do you consult me in the matter at all? If you had gone and married him without saying a word to me, I could hardly have been angry—simply because, poor girl, you can't do a better thing.'

'Don't say that and dishearten me.'

'You are right: I will not.'

'I do not plead for him, aunt. Human nature is weak, and I am not a blind woman to insist that he is perfect. I did think so, but I don't now. But I know my course, and you know that I know it. I hope for the best.'

'And so do I, and we will both continue to,' said Mrs. Yeobright, rising and kissing her. 'Then the wedding, if it comes off, will be on the morning of the very day Clym comes home?'

'Yes. I decided that it ought to be over before he came. After that you can look him in the face, and so can I. Our concealments will matter nothing.'

Mrs. Yeobright moved her head in thoughtful assent, and presently said, 'Do you wish me to give you away? I am willing to undertake that, you know, if you wish, as I was last time. After once forbidding the banns, I think I can do no less.'

'I don't think I will ask you to come,' said Thomasin reluctantly, but with decision. 'It would be unpleasant, I am almost sure. Better let there be only strangers present, and none of my relations at all. I would rather have it so. I do not wish to do anything which may touch your credit, and I feel that I should be uncomfortable if you were there, after what has passed. I am only your niece, and there is no necessity why you should concern yourself more about me.'

'Well, he has beaten us,' her aunt said. 'It really seems as if he had been playing with you in this way in revenge for my humbling him as I did by standing up against him at first.'

'O no, aunt,' murmured Thomasin.

They said no more on the subject then. Diggorry Venn's knock came soon

after; and Mrs. Yeobright, on returning from her interview with him in the porch, carelessly observed, 'Another lover has come to ask for you.'

'No?'

'Yes; that queer young man Venn.'

'Asks to pay his addresses to me?'

'Yes; and I told him he was too late.'

Thomasin looked silently into the candle-flame. 'Poor Diggory!' she said, and then aroused herself to other things.

The next day was passed in mere mechanical deeds of preparation, both the women being anxious to immerse themselves in these to escape the emotional aspect of the situation. Some wearing apparel and other articles were collected anew for Thomasin, and remarks on domestic details were frequently made, so as to obscure any inner misgivings about her future as Wildeve's wife.

The appointed morning came. The arrangement with Wildeve was that he should meet her at the church, to guard against any unpleasant curiosity which might have affected them had they been seen walking off together in the usual country way.

Aunt and niece stood together in the bedroom where the bride was dressing. The sun, where it could catch it, made a mirror of Thomasin's hair, which she always wore braided. It was braided according to a calendric system: the more important the day the more numerous the strands in the braid. On ordinary working-days she braided it in threes; on ordinary Sundays in fours; at May-polings, gipsyings, and the like, she braided it in fives. Years ago she had said that when she married she would braid it in sevens. She had braided it in sevens to-day.

'I have been thinking that I will wear my blue silk after all,' she said. 'It is my wedding day, even though there may be something sad about the time. I mean,' she added, anxious to correct any wrong impression, 'not sad in itself, but in its having had great disappointment and trouble before it.'

Mrs. Yeobright breathed in a way which might have been called a sigh. 'I almost wish Clym had been at home,' she said. 'Of course you chose the time because of his absence.'

'Partly. I have felt that I acted unfairly to him in not telling him all; but, as it was done not to grieve him, I thought I would carry out the plan to its end, and tell the whole story when the sky was clear.'

'You are a practical little woman,' said Mrs. Yeobright, smiling. 'I wish you and he—no, I don't wish anything. There, it is nine o'clock,' she interrupted, hearing a whizz and a dinging downstairs.

'I told Damon I would leave at nine,' said Thomasin, hastening out of the room.

Her aunt followed. When Thomasin was going down the little walk from the door to the wicket-gate, Mrs. Yeobright looked reluctantly at her, and said, 'It is a shame to let you go alone.'

'It is necessary,' said Thomasin.

'At any rate,' added her aunt with forced cheerfulness, 'I shall call upon you this afternoon, and bring the cake with me. If Clym has returned by that time he will perhaps come too. I wish to show Mr. Wildeve that I bear him no ill-will. Let the past be forgotten. Well, God bless you! There, I don't believe in old superstitions, but I'll do it.' She threw a slipper at the retreating figure of the girl, who turned, smiled, and went on again.

A few steps further, and she looked back. 'Did you call me, aunt?' she tremulously inquired. 'Good-bye!'

Moved by an uncontrollable feeling as she looked upon Mrs. Yeobright's worn, wet face, she ran back, when her aunt came forward, and they met again. 'O—Tamsie,' said the elder, weeping, 'I don't like to let you go.'

'I—I am——' Thomasin began, giving way likewise. But, quelling her grief, she said 'Good-bye!' again and went on.

Then Mrs. Yeobright saw a little figure wending its way between the scratching furze-bushes, and diminishing far up the valley—a pale-blue spot in a vast field of neutral brown, solitary and undefended except by the power of her own hope.

But the worst feature in the case was one which did not appear in the landscape; it was the man.

The hour chosen for the ceremony by Thomasin and Wildeve had been so timed as to enable her to escape the awkwardness of meeting her cousin Clym, who was returning the same morning. To own to the partial truth of what he had heard would be distressing as long as the humiliating position resulting from the event was unimproved. It was only after a second and successful journey to the altar that she could lift up her head and prove the failure of the first attempt a pure accident.

She had not been gone from Blooms-End more than half an hour when Yeobright came up the road from the other direction and entered the house.

'I had an early breakfast,' he said to his mother after greeting her. 'Now I could eat a little more.'

They sat down to the repeated meal, and he went on in a low, anxious voice, apparently imagining that Thomasin had not yet come downstairs, 'What's this I have heard about Thomasin and Mr. Wildeve?'

'It is true in many points,' said Mrs. Yeobright quietly; 'but it is all right now, I hope.' She looked at the clock.

'True?'

'Thomasin is gone to him to-day.'

Clym pushed away his breakfast. 'Then there is a scandal of some sort, and that's what's the matter with Thomasin. Was it this that made her ill?'

'Yes. Not a scandal: a misfortune. I will tell you all about it, Clym. You must not be angry, but you must listen, and you'll find that what we have done has been done for the best.'

She then told him the circumstances. All that he had known of the affair before he had returned from Paris was that there had existed an attachment between Thomasin and Wildeve, which his mother had at first discount-

enanced, but had since, owing to the arguments of Thomasin, looked upon in a little more favourable light. When she, therefore, proceeded to explain all he was greatly surprised and troubled.

'And she determined that the wedding should be over before you came back,' said Mrs. Yeobright, 'that there might be no chance of her meeting you, and having a very painful time of it. That's why she has gone to him; they have arranged to be married this morning.'

'But I can't understand it,' said Yeobright, rising. 'Tis so unlike her. I can see why you did not write to me after her unfortunate return home. But why didn't you let me know when the wedding was going to be—the first time?'

'Well, I felt vexed with her just then. She seemed to me to be obstinate; and when I found that you were nothing in her mind I vowed that she should be nothing in yours. I felt that she was only my niece after all; I told her she might marry, but that I should take no interest in it, and should not bother you about it either.'

'It wouldn't have been bothering me. Mother, you did wrong.'

'I thought it might disturb you in your business, and that you might throw up your situation, or injure your prospects in some way because of it, so I said nothing. Of course, if they had married at that time in a proper manner, I should have told you at once.'

'Tamsin actually being married while we are sitting here!'

'Yes. Unless some accident happens again, as it did the first time. It may, considering he's the same man.'

'Yes, and I believe it will. Was it right to let her go? Suppose Wildeve is really a bad fellow?'

'Then he won't come, and she'll come home again.'

'You should have looked more into it.'

'It is useless to say that,' his mother answered, with an impatient look of sorrow. 'You don't know how bad it has been here with us all these weeks, Clym. You don't know what a mortification anything of that sort is to a woman. You don't know the sleepless nights we've had in this house, and the almost bitter words that have passed between us since that Fifth of November. I hope never to pass seven such weeks again. Tamsin has not gone outside the door, and I have been ashamed to look anybody in the face; and now you blame me for letting her do the only thing that can be done to set that trouble straight.'

'No,' he said slowly. 'Upon the whole I don't blame you. But just consider how sudden it seems to me. Here was I, knowing nothing; and then I am told all at once that Tamsie is gone to be married. Well, I suppose there was nothing better to do. Do you know, mother,' he continued after a moment or two, looking suddenly interested in his own past history, 'I once thought of Tamsin as a sweetheart? Yes, I did. How odd boys are! And when I came home and saw her this time she seemed so much more affectionate than usual, that I was quite reminded of those days, particularly

on the night of the party, when she was unwell. We had the party just the same—was not that rather cruel to her?’

‘It made no difference. I had arranged to give one, and it was not worth while to make more gloom than necessary. To begin by shutting ourselves up and telling you of Tamsin’s misfortunes would have been a poor sort of welcome.’

Clym remained thinking. ‘I almost wish you had not had that party,’ he said; ‘and for other reasons. But I will tell you in a day or two. We must think of Tamsin now.’

They lapsed into silence. ‘I’ll tell you what,’ said Yeobright again, in a tone which showed some slumbering feeling still. ‘I don’t think it kind to Tamsin to let her be married like this, and neither of us there to keep up her spirits or care a bit about her. She hasn’t disgraced herself, or done anything to deserve that. It is bad enough that the wedding should be so hurried and unceremonious, without our keeping away from it in addition. Upon my soul, ’tis almost a shame. I’ll go.’

‘It is over by this time,’ said his mother with a sigh; ‘unless they were late, or he——’

‘Then I shall be soon enough to see them come out. I don’t quite like your keeping me in ignorance, mother, after all. Really, I half hope he has failed to meet her?’

‘And ruined her character?’

‘Nonsense: that wouldn’t ruin Thomasin.’

He took up his hat and hastily left the house. Mrs. Yeobright looked rather unhappy, and sat still, deep in thought. But she was not long left alone. A few minutes later Clym came back again, and in his company came Diggory Venn.

‘I find there isn’t time for me to get there,’ said Clym.

‘Is she married?’ Mrs. Yeobright inquired, turning to the reddleman a face in which a strange strife of wishes, for and against, was apparent.

Venn bowed. ‘She is, ma’am.’

‘How strange it sounds,’ murmured Clym.

‘And he didn’t disappoint her this time?’ said Mrs. Yeobright.

‘He did not. And there is now no slight on her name. I was hastening ath’art to tell you at once, as I saw you were not there.’

‘How came you to be there? How did you know it?’ she asked.

‘I have been in that neighborhood for some time, and I saw them go in,’ said the reddleman. ‘Wildve came up to the door, punctual as the clock. I didn’t expect it of him.’ He did not add, as he might have added, that how he came to be in that neighbourhood was not by accident; that, since Wildve’s resumption of his right to Thomasin, Venn, with the thoroughness which was part of his character, had determined to see the end of the episode.

‘Who was there?’ said Mrs. Yeobright.

'Nobody hardly. I stood right out of the way, and she did not see me.' The reddleman spoke huskily, and looked into the garden.

'Who gave her away?'

'Miss Vye.'

'How very remarkable! Miss Vye! It is to be considered an honour, I suppose.'

'Who's Miss Vye?' said Clym.

'Captain Vye's granddaughter, of Mistover Knap.'

'A proud girl from Budmouth,' said Mrs. Yeobright. 'One not much to my liking. People say she's a witch, but of course that's absurd.'

The reddleman kept to himself his acquaintance with that fair personage, and also that Eustacia was there because he went to fetch her, in accordance with a promise he had previously given as soon as he learnt that the marriage was to take place. He merely said, in continuation of the story—

'I was sitting on the churchyard-wall when they came up, one from one way, the other from the other; and Miss Vye was walking thereabouts, looking at the head-stones. As soon as they had gone in I went to the door, feeling I should like to see it, as I knew her so well. I pulled off my boots because they were so noisy, and went up into the gallery. I saw then that the parson and clerk were already there.'

'How came Miss Vye to have anything to do with it, if she was only on a walk that way?'

'Because there was nobody else. She had gone into the church just before me, not into the gallery. The parson looked round before beginning, and as she was the only one near he beckoned to her, and she went up to the rails. After that, when it came to signing the book, she pushed up her veil and signed; and Tamsin seemed to thank her for her kindness.' The reddleman told the tale thoughtfully, for there lingered upon his vision the changing colour of Wildeve, when Eustacia lifted the thick veil which had concealed her from recognition and looked calmly into his face. 'And then,' said Digory sadly, 'I came away, for her history as Tamsin Yeobright was over.'

'I offered to go,' said Mrs. Yeobright regretfully. 'But she said it was not necessary.'

'Well, it is no matter,' said the reddleman. 'The thing is done at last as it was meant to be at first, and God send her happiness. Now I'll wish you good morning.'

He placed his cap on his head and went out.

From that instant of leaving Mrs. Yeobright's door, the reddleman was seen no more in or about Egdon Heath for a space of many months. He vanished entirely. The nook among the brambles where his van had been standing was as vacant as ever the next morning, and scarcely a sign remained to show that he had been there, excepting a few straws, and a little redness on the turf, which was washed away by the next storm of rain.

The report that Digory had brought of the wedding, correct as far as it went, was deficient in one significant particular, which had escaped him

through his being at some distance back in the church. When Thomasin was tremblingly engaged in signing her name Wildeve had flung towards Eustacia a glance that said plainly, 'I have punished you now.' She had replied in a low tone—and he little thought how truly—'You mistake; it gives me sincerest pleasure to see her your wife to-day.'

BOOK THREE: THE FASCINATION

I. 'MY MIND TO ME A KINGDOM IS'

IN Clym Yeobright's face could be dimly seen the typical countenance of the future. Should there be a classic period to art hereafter, its Pheidias may produce such faces. The view of life as a thing to be put up with, replacing that zest for existence, which was so intense in early civilizations, must ultimately enter so thoroughly into the constitution of the advanced races that its facial expression will become accepted as a new artistic departure. People already feel that a man who lives without disturbing a curve of feature, or setting a mark of mental concern anywhere upon himself, is too far removed from modern perceptiveness to be a modern type. Physically beautiful men—the glory of the race when it was young—are almost an anachronism now; and we may wonder whether, at some time or other, physically beautiful women may not be an anachronism likewise.

The truth seems to be that a long line of disillusionive centuries has permanently displaced the Hellenic idea of life, or whatever it may be called. What the Greeks only suspected we know well; what their Æschylus imagined our nursery children feel. That old-fashioned revelling in the general situation grows less and less possible as we uncover the defects of natural laws, and see the quandary that man is in by their operation.

The lineaments which will get embodied in ideals based upon this new recognition will probably be akin to those of Yeobright. The observer's eye was arrested, not by his face as a picture, but by his face as a page; not by what it was, but by what it recorded. His features were attractive in the light of symbols, as sounds intrinsically common become attractive in language, and as shapes intrinsically simple become interesting in writing.

He had been a lad of whom something was expected. Beyond this all had been chaos. That he would be successful in an original way, or that he would go to the dogs in an original way, seemed equally probable. The only absolute certainty about him was that he would not stand still in the circumstances amid which he was born.

Hence, when his name was casually mentioned by neighbouring yeomen, the listener said, 'Ah, Clym Yeobright: what is he doing now?' When the instinctive question about a person is, What is he doing? it is felt that he will not be found to be, like most of us, doing nothing in particular. There is an indefinite sense that he must be invading some region of singularity, good or bad. The devout hope is that he is doing well. The secret faith is that he is making a mess of it. Half a dozen comfortable market-men, who were habitual callers at the Quiet Woman as they passed by in their

carts, were partial to the topic. In fact, though they were not Egdon men, they could hardly avoid it while they sucked their long clay tubes and regarded the heath through the window. Clym had been so inwoven with the heath in his boyhood that hardly anybody could look upon it without thinking of him. So the subject recurred: if he were making a fortune and a name, so much the better for him; if he were making a tragical figure in the world, so much the better for a narrative.

The fact was that Yeobright's fame had spread to an awkward extent before he left home. 'It is bad when your fame outruns your means,' said the Spanish Jesuit, Gracian. At the age of six he had asked a Scripture riddle: 'Who was the first man known to wear breeches?' and applause had resounded from the very verge of the heath. At seven he painted the Battle of Waterloo with tiger-lily pollen and black-currant juice, in the absence of water-colours. By the time he reached twelve he had in this manner been heard of as artist and scholar for at least two miles round. An individual whose fame spreads three or four thousand yards in the time taken by the fame of others similarly situated to travel six or eight hundred, must of necessity have something in him. Possibly Clym's fame, like Homer's, owed something to the accidents of his situation; nevertheless famous he was.

He grew up and was helped out in life. That waggery of fate which started Clive as a writing clerk, Gay as a linen-draper, Keats as a surgeon, and a thousand others in a thousand other odd ways, banished the wild and ascetic heath lad to a trade whose sole concern was with the especial symbols of self-indulgence and vainglory.

The details of this choice of a business for him it is not necessary to give. At the death of his father a neighbouring gentleman had kindly undertaken to give the boy a start; and this assumed the form of sending him to Budmouth. Yeobright did not wish to go there, but it was the only feasible opening. Thence he went to London; and thence, shortly after, to Paris, where he had remained till now.

Something being expected of him, he had not been at home many days before a great curiosity as to why he stayed on so long began to arise in the heath. The natural term of a holiday had passed, yet he still remained. On the Sunday morning following the week of Thomasin's marriage a discussion on this subject was in progress at a hair-cutting before Fairway's house. Here the local barbering was always done at this hour on this day; to be followed by the great Sunday wash of the inhabitants at noon, which in its turn was followed by the great Sunday dressing an hour later. On Egdon Heath Sunday proper did not begin till dinner-time, and even then it was a somewhat battered specimen of the day.

These Sunday-morning hair-cuttings were performed by Fairway; the victim sitting on a chopping-block in front of the house, without a coat, and the neighbours gossiping around, idly observing the locks of hair as they rose upon the wind after the snip, and flew away out of sight to the four quarters of the heavens. Summer and winter the scene was the same, unless

the wind were more than usually blustering, when the stool was shifted a few feet round the corner. To complain of cold in sitting out of doors, hatless and coatless, while Fairway told true stories between the cuts of the scissors, would have been to pronounce yourself no man at once. To flinch, exclaim, or move a muscle of the face at the small stabs under the ear received from those instruments, or at scarifications of the neck by the comb, would have been thought a gross breach of good manners, considering that Fairway did it all for nothing. A bleeding about the poll on Sunday afternoons was amply accounted for by the explanation, 'I have had my hair cut, you know.'

The conversation on Yeobright had been started by a distant view of the young man rambling leisurely across the heath before them.

'A man who is doing well elsewhere wouldn't bide here two or three weeks for nothing,' said Fairway. 'He's got some project in 's head—depend upon that.'

'Well, 'a can't keep a diment shop here,' said Sam.

'I don't see why he should have had them two heavy boxes home if he had not been going to bide; and what there is for him to do here the Lord in heaven knows.'

Before many more surmises could be indulged in Yeobright had come near; and seeing the hair-cutting group he turned aside to join them. Marching up, and looking critically at their faces for a moment, he said, without introduction, 'Now, folks, let me guess what you have been talking about.'

'Ay, sure, if you will,' said Sam.

'About me.'

'Now, it is a thing I shouldn't have dreamed of doing, otherwise,' said Fairway in a tone of integrity; 'but since you have named it, Master Yeobright, I'll own that we was talking about 'ee. We were wondering what could keep you home here mollyhorning about when you have made such a world-wide name for yourself in the nick-nack trade—now, that's the truth o't.'

'I'll tell you,' said Yeobright, with unexpected earnestness. 'I am not sorry to have the opportunity. I've come home because, all things considered, I can be a trifle less useless here than anywhere else. But I have only lately found this out. When I first got away from home I thought this place was not worth troubling about. I thought our life here was contemptible. To oil your boots instead of blacking them, to dust your coat with a switch instead of a brush: was there ever anything more ridiculous? I said.'

'So 'tis; so 'tis!'

'No, no—you are wrong; it isn't.'

'Beg your pardon, we thought that was your maning?'

'Well, this became very depressing as time went on. I found that I was trying to be like people who had hardly anything in common with myself. I was endeavouring to put off one sort of life for another sort of life, which was not better than the life I had known before. It was simply different.'

'True; a sight different,' said Fairway.

'Yes, Paris must be a taking place,' said Humphrey. 'Grand shop-winders, trumpets, and drums; and here be we out of doors in all winds and weathers—'

'But you mistake me,' pleaded Clym. 'All this was very depressing. But not so depressing as something I next perceived—that my business was the idlest, vainest, most effeminate business that ever a man could be put to. That decided me: I would give it up and try to follow some rational occupation among the people I knew best, and to whom I could be of most use. I have come home; and this is how I mean to carry out my plan. I shall keep a school as near to Egdon as possible, so as to be able to walk over here and have a night-school in my mother's house. But I must study a little at first, to get properly qualified. Now, neighbours, I must go.'

And Clym resumed his walk across the heath.

'He'll never carry it out in the world,' said Fairway. 'In a few weeks he'll learn to see things otherwise.'

'Tis good-hearted of the young man,' said another. 'But, for my part, I think he had better mind his business.'

II. THE NEW COURSE CAUSES DISAPPOINTMENT

YEOBRIGHT loved his kind. He had a conviction that the want of most men was knowledge of a sort which brings wisdom rather than affluence. He wished to raise the class at the expense of individuals rather than individuals at the expense of the class. What was more, he was ready at once to be the first unit sacrificed.

In passing from the bucolic to the intellectual life the intermediate stages are usually two at least, frequently many more; and one of these stages is almost sure to be worldly advance. We can hardly imagine bucolic placidity quickening to intellectual aims without imagining social aims as the transitional phase. Yeobright's local peculiarity was that in striving at high thinking he still cleaved to plain living—nay, wild and meagre living in many respects, and brotherliness with clowns.

He was a John the Baptist who took ennoblement rather than repentance for his text. Mentally he was in a provincial future, that is, he was in many points abreast with the central town thinkers of his date. Much of this development he may have owed to his studious life in Paris, where he had become acquainted with ethical systems popular at the time.

In consequence of this relatively advanced position, Yeobright might have been called unfortunate. The rural world was not ripe for him. A man should be only partially before his time: to be completely to the vanward in aspirations is fatal to fame. Had Philip's warlike son been intellectually so far ahead as to have attempted civilization without bloodshed, he would

have been twice the godlike hero that he seemed, but nobody would have heard of an Alexander.

In the interests of renown the forwardness should lie chiefly in the capacity to handle things. Successful propagandists have succeeded because the doctrine they bring into form is that which their listeners have for some time felt without being able to shape. A man who advocates æsthetic effort and deprecates social effort is only likely to be understood by a class to which social effort has become a stale matter. To argue upon the possibility of culture before luxury to the bucolic world may be to argue truly, but it is an attempt to disturb a sequence to which humanity has been long accustomed. Yeobright preaching to the Egdon eremites that they might rise to a serene comprehensiveness without going through the process of enriching themselves, was not unlike arguing to ancient Chaldeans that in ascending from earth to the pure empyrean it was not necessary to pass first into the intervening heaven of ether.

Was Yeobright's mind well-proportioned? No. A well-proportioned mind is one which shows no particular bias; one of which we may safely say that it will never cause its owner to be confined as a madman, tortured as a heretic, or crucified as a blasphemer. Also, on the other hand, that it will never cause him to be applauded as a prophet, revered as a priest, or exalted as a king. Its usual blessings are happiness and mediocrity. It produces the poetry of Rogers, the paintings of West, the statecraft of North, the spiritual guidance of Sumner; enabling its possessors to find their way to wealth, to wind up well, to step with dignity off the stage, to die comfortably in their beds, and to get the decent monument which, in many cases, they deserve. It never would have allowed Yeobright to do such a ridiculous thing as throw up his business to benefit his fellow-creatures.

He walked along towards home without attending to paths. If any one knew the heath well, it was Clym. He was permeated with its scenes, with its substance, and with its odours. He might be said to be its product. His eyes had first opened thereon; with its appearance all the first images of his memory were mingled; his estimate of life had been coloured by it; his toys had been the flint knives and arrow-heads which he found there, wondering why stones should 'grow' to such odd shapes; his flowers, the purple bells and yellow gorse; his animal kingdom, the snakes and coppers; his society, its human haunters. Take all the varying hates felt by Eustacia Vye towards the heath, and translate them into loves, and you have the heart of Clym. He gazed upon the wide prospect as he walked, and was glad.

To many persons this Egdon was a place which had slipped out of its century generations ago, to intrude as an uncouth object into this. It was an obsolete thing, and few cared to study it. How could this be otherwise in the days of square fields, plashed hedges, and meadows watered on a plan so rectangular that on a fine day they look like silver gridirons? The farmer, in his ride, who could smile at artificial grasses, look with solicitude at the coming corn, and sigh with sadness at the fly-eaten turnips, bestowed upon the

distant upland of heath nothing better than a frown. But as for Yeobright, when he looked from the heights on his way he could not help indulging in a barbarous satisfaction at observing that, in some of the attempts at reclamation from the waste, tillage, after holding on for a year or two, had receded again in despair, the ferns and furze-tufts stubbornly reasserting themselves.

He descended into the valley, and soon reached his home at Blooms-End. His mother was snipping dead leaves from the window-plants. She looked up at him as if she did not understand the meaning of his long stay with her; her face had worn that look for several days. He could perceive that the curiosity which had been shown by the hair-cutting group amounted in his mother to concern. But she had asked no question with her lips, even when the arrival of his trunks suggested that he was not going to leave her soon. Her silence besought an explanation of him more loudly than words.

'I am not going back to Paris again, mother,' he said. 'At least, in my old capacity. I have given up the business.'

Mrs. Yeobright turned in pained surprise. 'I thought something was amiss, because of the boxes. I wonder you did not tell me sooner.'

'I ought to have done it. But I have been in doubt whether you would be pleased with my plan. I was not quite clear on a few points myself. I am going to take an entirely new course.'

'I am astonished, Clym. How can you want to do better than you've been doing?'

'Very easily. But I shall not do better in the way you mean; I suppose it will be called doing worse. But I hate that business of mine, and I want to do some worthy thing before I die. As a schoolmaster I think to do it—a schoolmaster to the poor and ignorant, to teach them what nobody else will.'

'After all the trouble that has been taken to give you a start, and when there is nothing to do but to keep straight on towards affluence, you say you will be a poor man's schoolmaster. Your fancies will be your ruin, Clym.'

Mrs. Yeobright spoke calmly, but the force of feeling behind the words was but too apparent to one who knew her as well as her son did. He did not answer. There was in his face that hopelessness of being understood which comes when the objector is constitutionally beyond the reach of a logic that, even under favouring conditions, is almost too coarse a vehicle for the subtlety of the argument.

No more was said on the subject till the end of dinner. His mother then began, as if there had been no interval since the morning. 'It disturbs me, Clym, to find that you have come home with such thoughts as those. I hadn't the least idea that you meant to go backward in the world by your own free choice. Of course, I have always supposed you were going to push straight on, as other men do—all who deserve the name—when they have been put in a good way of doing well.'

'I cannot help it,' said Clym, in a troubled tone. 'Mother, I hate the flashy business. Talk about men who deserve the name, can any man

deserving the name waste his time in that effeminate way, when he sees half the world going to ruin for want of somebody to buckle to and teach them how to breast the misery they are born to? I get up every morning and see the whole creation groaning and travailing in pain, as St. Paul says, and yet there am I, trafficking in glittering splendours with wealthy women and titled libertines, and pandering to the meanest vanities—I, who have health and strength enough for anything. I have been troubled in my mind about it all the year, and the end is that I cannot do it any more.'

'Why can't you do it as well as others?'

'I don't know, except that there are many things other people care for which I don't; and that's partly why I think I ought to do this. For one thing, my body does not require much of me. I cannot enjoy delicacies; good things are wasted upon me. Well, I ought to turn that defect to advantage, and by being able to do without what other people require I can spend what such things cost upon anybody else.'

Now, Yeobright, having inherited some of these very instincts from the woman before him, could not fail to awaken a reciprocity in her through her feelings, if not by arguments, disguise it as she might for his good. She spoke with less assurance. 'And yet you might have been a wealthy man if you had only persevered. Manager to that large diamond establishment—what better can a man wish for? What a post of trust and respect! I suppose you will be like your father; like him, you are getting weary of doing well.'

'No,' said her son; 'I am not weary of that, though I am weary of what you mean by it. Mother, what is doing well?'

Mrs. Yeobright was far too thoughtful a woman to be content with ready definitions, and, like the 'What is wisdom?' of Plato's Socrates, and the 'What is truth?' of Pontius Pilate, Yeobright's burning question received no answer.

The silence was broken by the clash of the garden gate, a tap at the door, and its opening. Christian Cantle appeared in the room in his Sunday clothes.

It was the custom on Egdon to begin the preface to a story before absolutely entering the house, so as to be well in for the body of the narrative by the time visitor and visited stood face to face. Christian had been saying to them while the door was leaving its latch, 'To think that I, who go from home but once in a while, and hardly then, should have been there this morning!'

'Tis news you have brought us, then, Christian?' said Mrs. Yeobright.

'Ay, sure, about a witch, and ye must overlook my time o' day; for, says I, "I must go and tell 'em, though they won't have half done dinner." I assure ye it made me shake like a driven leaf. Do ye think any harm will come o't?'

'Well—what?'

'This morning at church we was all standing up, and the pa'son said, "Let us pray." "Well," thinks I, "one may as well kneel as stand;" so down

I went; and, more than that, all the rest were as willing to oblige the man as I. We hadn't been hard at it for more than a minute when a most terrible screech sounded through church, as if somebody had just gied up their heart's blood. All the folk jumped up, and then we found that Susan Nunsuch had pricked Miss Vye with a long stocking-needle, as she had threatened to do as soon as ever she could get the young lady to church, where she don't come very often. She've waited for this chance for weeks, so as to draw her blood and put an end to the bewitching of Susan's children that has been carried on so long. Sue followed her into church, sat next to her, and as soon as she could find a chance in went the stocking-needle into my lady's arm.'

'Good heaven, how horrid!' said Mrs. Yeobright.

'Sue pricked her that deep that the maid fainted away; and as I was afeard there might be some tumult among us, I got behind the bass-viol and didn't see no more. But they carried her out into the air, 'tis said; but when they looked round for Sue she was gone. What a scream that girl gied, poor thing! There were the pa'son in his surplice holding up his hand and saying, "Sit down, my good people, sit down!" But the deuce a bit would they sit down. O, and what d'ye think I found out, Mrs. Yeobright? The pa'son wears a suit of clothes under his surplice!—I could see his black sleeve when he held up his arm.'

''Tis a cruel thing,' said Yeobright.

'Yes,' said his mother.

'The nation ought to look into it,' said Christian. 'Here's Humphrey coming, I think.'

In came Humphrey. 'Well, have ye heard the news? But I see you have. 'Tis a very strange thing that whenever one of Egdon folk goes to church some rum job or other is sure to go on. The last time one of us was there was when neighbour Fairway went in the fall; and that was the day you forbad the banns, Mrs. Yeobright.'

'Has this cruelly treated girl been able to walk home?' said Clym.

'They say she got better, and went home very well. And now I've told it I must be moving homeward myself.'

'And I,' said Humphrey. 'Truly now we shall see if there's anything in what folks say about her.'

When they were gone into the heath again Yeobright said quietly to his mother, 'Do you think I have turned teacher too soon?'

'It is right that there should be schoolmasters, and missionaries, and all such men,' she replied. 'But it is right, too, that I should try to lift you out of this life into something richer, and that you should not come back again, and be as if I had not tried at all.'

Later in the day Sam, the turf-cutter, entered. 'I've come a-borrowing, Mrs Yeobright. I suppose you have heard what's been happening to the beauty on the hill?'

'Yes, Sam: half a dozen have been telling us.'

'Beauty?' said Clym

'Yes, tolerably well-favoured,' Sam replied. 'Lord! all the country owns that 'tis one of the strange things in the world that such a woman should have come to live up there.'

'Dark or fair?'

'Now, though I've seen her twenty times, that's a thing I cannot call to mind.'

'Darker than Tamsin,' murmured Mrs. Yeobright.

'A woman who seems to care for nothing at all, as you may say.'

'She is melancholy then?' inquired Clym.

'She mopes about by herself, and don't mix in with the people.'

'Is she a young lady inclined for adventures?'

'Not to my knowledge.'

'Doesn't join in with the lads in their games, to get some sort of excitement in this lonely place?'

'No.'

'Mumming, for instance?'

'No. Her notions be different. I should rather say her thoughts were far away from here, with lords and ladies she'll never know, and mansions she'll never see again.'

Observing that Clym appeared singularly interested Mrs. Yeobright said rather uneasily to Sam, 'You see more in her than most of us do. Miss Vye is to my mind too idle to be charming. I have never heard that she is of any use to herself or to other people. Good girls don't get treated as witches even on Egdon.'

'Nonsense—that proves nothing either way,' said Yeobright.

'Well, of course I don't understand such niceties,' said Sam, withdrawing from a possibly unpleasant argument; 'and what she is we must wait for time to tell us. The business that I have really called about is this, to borrow the longest and strongest rope you have. The captain's bucket has dropped into the well, and they are in want of water; and as all the chaps are at home to-day we think we can get it out for him. We have three cart-ropes already, but they won't reach to the bottom.'

Mrs. Yeobright told him that he might have whatever ropes he could find in the outhouse, and Sam went out to search. When he passed by the door Clym joined him, and accompanied him to the gate.

'Is this young witch-lady going to stay long at Mistover?' he asked.

'I should say so.'

'What a cruel shame to ill-use her! She must have suffered greatly—more in mind than in body.'

''Twas a graceless trick—such a handsome girl, too. You ought to see her, Mr. Yeobright, being a young man come from far, and with a little more to show for your years than most of us.'

'Do you think she would like to teach children?' said Clym.

Sam shook his head. 'Quite a different sort of body from that, I reckon.'

'O, it was merely something which occurred to me. It would of course be necessary to see her and talk it over—not an easy thing, by the way, for my family and hers are not very friendly.'

'I'll tell you how you mid see her, Mr. Yeobright,' said Sam. 'We are going to grapple for the bucket at six o'clock to-night at her house, and you could lend a hand. There's five or six coming, but the well is deep, and another might be useful, if you don't mind appearing in that shape. She's sure to be walking round.'

'I'll think of it,' said Yeobright; and they parted.

He thought of it a good deal; but nothing more was said about Eustacia inside the house at that time. Whether this romantic martyr to superstition and the melancholy mummer he had conversed with under the full moon were one and the same person remained as yet a problem.

III. THE FIRST ACT IN A TIMEWORN DRAMA

THE afternoon was fine, and Yeobright walked on the heath for an hour with his mother. When they reached the lofty ridge which divided the valley of Blooms-End from the adjoining valley they stood still and looked round. The Quiet Woman Inn was visible on the low margin of the heath in one direction, and afar on the other hand rose Mistover Knap.

'You mean to call on Thomasin?' he inquired.

'Yes. But you need not come this time,' said his mother.

'In that case I'll branch off here, mother. I am going to Mistover.'

Mrs. Yeobright turned to him inquiringly.

'I am going to help them get the bucket out of the captain's well,' he continued. 'As it is so very deep I may be useful. And I should like to see this Miss Vye—not so much for her good looks as for another reason.'

'Must you go?' his mother asked.

'I thought to.'

And they parted. 'There is no help for it,' murmured Clym's mother gloomily as he withdrew. 'They are sure to see each other. I wish Sam would carry his news to other houses than mine.'

Clym's retreating figure got smaller and smaller as it rose and fell over the hillocks on his way. 'He is tender-hearted,' said Mrs. Yeobright to herself while she watched him; 'otherwise it would matter little. How he's going on!'

He was, indeed, walking with a will over the furze, as straight as a line, as if his life depended upon it. His mother drew a long breath, and turned to go back by the way she had come. The evening films began to make nebulous pictures of the valleys, but the high lands still were raked by the

declining rays of the winter sun, which glanced on Clym as he walked forward, eyed by every rabbit and fieldfare around, a long shadow advancing in front of him.

On drawing near to the furze-covered bank and ditch which fortified the captain's dwelling he could hear voices within, signifying that operations had been already begun. At the side-entrance gate he stopped and looked over.

Half a dozen able-bodied men were standing in a line from the well-mouth, holding a rope which passed over the well-roller into the depths below. Fairway, with a piece of smaller rope round his body, made fast to one of the standards, to guard against accidents, was leaning over the opening, his right hand clasping the vertical rope that descended into the well.

'Now, silence, folks,' said Fairway.

The talking ceased, and Fairway gave a circular motion to the rope, as if he were stirring batter. At the end of a minute a dull splashing reverberated from the bottom of the well; the helical twist he had imparted to the rope had reached the grapnel below.

'Haul!' said Fairway; and the men who held the rope began to gather it over the wheel.

'I think we've got sommat,' said one of the haulers-in.

'Then pull steady,' said Fairway.

They gathered up more and more, till a regular dripping into the well could be heard below. It grew smarter with the increasing height of the bucket, and presently a hundred and fifty feet of rope had been pulled in.

Fairway then lit a lantern, tied it to another cord, and began lowering it into the well beside the first. Clym came forward and looked down. Strange humid leaves, which knew nothing of the seasons of the year, and quaint-natured moss were revealed on the well-side as the lantern descended; till its rays fell upon a confused mass of rope and bucket dangling in the dank, dark air.

'We've only got en by the edge of the hoop—steady, for God's sake!' said Fairway.

They pulled with the greatest gentleness, till the wet bucket appeared about two yards below them, like a dead friend come to earth again. Three or four hands were stretched out, then jerk went the rope, whizz went the wheel, the two foremost haulers fell backward, the beating of a falling body was heard, receding down the sides of the well, and a thunderous uproar arose at the bottom. The bucket was gone again.

'Damn the bucket!' said Fairway.

'Lower again,' said Sam.

'I'm as stiff as a ram's horn stooping so long,' said Fairway, standing up and stretching himself till his joints creaked.

'Rest a few minutes, Timothy,' said Yeobright. 'I'll take your place.'

The grapnel was again lowered. Its smart impact upon the distant water reached their ears like a kiss, whereupon Yeobright knelt down, and leaning

over the well began dragging the grapnel round and round as Fairway had done.

'Tie a rope round him—it is dangerous!' cried a soft and anxious voice somewhere above them.

Everybody turned. The speaker was a woman, gazing down upon the group from an upper window, whose panes blazed in the ruddy glare from the west. Her lips were parted and she appeared for the moment to forget where she was.

The rope was accordingly tied round his waist, and the work proceeded. At the next haul the weight was not heavy, and it was discovered that they had only secured a coil of the rope detached from the bucket. The tangled mass was thrown into the background; Humphrey took Yeobright's place, and the grapnel was lowered again.

Yeobright retired to the heap of recovered rope in a meditative mood. Of the identity between the lady's voice and that of the melancholy mummer he had not a moment's doubt. 'How thoughtful of her!' he said to himself.

Eustacia, who had reddened when she perceived the effect of her exclamation upon the group below, was no longer to be seen at the window, though Yeobright scanned it wistfully. While he stood there the men at the well succeeded in getting up the bucket without a mishap. One of them then went to inquire for the captain, to learn what orders he wished to give for mending the well-tackle. The captain proved to be away from home; and Eustacia appeared at the door and came out. She had lapsed into an easy and dignified calm, far removed from the intensity of life in her words of solicitude for Clym's safety.

'Will it be possible to draw water here to-night?' she inquired.

'No, miss; the bottom of the bucket is clean knocked out. And as we can do no more now we'll leave off, and come again to-morrow morning.'

'No water,' she murmured, turning away.

'I can send you up some from Blooms-End,' said Clym, coming forward and raising his hat as the men retired.

Yeobright and Eustacia looked at each other for one instant, as if each had in mind those few moments during which a certain moonlit scene was common to both. With the glance the calm fixity of her features sublimed itself to an expression of refinement and warmth: it was like garish noon rising to the dignity of sunset in a couple of seconds.

'Thank you; it will hardly be necessary,' she replied.

'But if you have no water?'

'Well, it is what I call no water,' she said, blushing, and lifting her long-lashed eyelids as if to lift them were a work requiring consideration. 'But my grandfather calls it water enough. This is what I mean.'

She moved away a few yards, and Clym followed. When she reached the corner of the enclosure, where the steps were formed for mounting the boundary bank, she sprang up with a lightness which seemed strange after

her listless movement towards the well. It incidentally showed that her apparent languor did not arise from lack of force.

Clym ascended behind her, and noticed a circular burnt patch at the top of the bank. 'Ashes?' he said.

'Yes,' said Eustacia. 'We had a little bonfire here last Fifth of November, and those are the marks of it.'

On that spot had stood the fire she had kindled to attract Wildeve.

'That's the only kind of water we have,' she continued, tossing a stone into the pool, which lay on the outside of the bank like the white of an eye without its pupil. The stone fell with a flounce, but no Wildeve appeared on the other side, as on a previous occasion there. 'My grandfather says he lived for more than twenty years at sea on water twice as bad as that,' she went on, 'and considers it quite good enough for us here on an emergency.'

'Well, as a matter of fact there are no impurities in the water of these pools at this time of the year. It has only just rained into them.'

She shook her head. 'I am managing to exist in a wilderness, but I cannot drink from a pond,' she said.

Clym looked towards the well, which was now deserted, the men having gone home. 'It is a long way to send for spring-water,' he said, after a silence. 'But since you don't like this in the pond, I'll try to get you some myself.' He went back to the well. 'Yes, I think I could do it by tying on this pail.'

'But, since I would not trouble the men to get it, I cannot in conscience let you.'

'I don't mind the trouble at all.'

He made fast the pail to the long coil of rope, put it over the wheel, and allowed it to descend by letting the rope slip through his hands. Before it had gone far, however, he checked it.

'I must make fast the end first, or we may lose the whole,' he said to Eustacia, who had drawn near. 'Could you hold this a moment, while I do it—or shall I call your servant?'

'I can hold it,' said Eustacia; and he placed the rope in her hands, going then to search for the end.

'I suppose I may let it slip down?' she inquired.

'I would advise you not to let it go far,' said Clym. 'It will get much heavier, you will find.'

However, Eustacia had begun to pay out. While he was tying she cried, 'I cannot stop it!'

Clym ran to her side, and found he could only check the rope by twisting the loose part round the upright post, when it stopped with a jerk. 'Has it hurt you?'

'Yes,' she replied.

'Very much?'

'No; I think not.' She opened her hands. One of them was bleeding; the rope had dragged off the skin. Eustacia wrapped it in her handkerchief.

'You should have let go,' said Yeobright. 'Why didn't you?'

'You said I was to hold on. . . . This is the second time I have been wounded to-day.'

'Ah, yes; I have heard of it. I blush for my native Egdon. Was it a serious injury you received in church, Miss Vye?'

There was such an abundance of sympathy in Clym's tone that Eustacia slowly drew up her sleeve and disclosed her round white arm. A bright red spot appeared on its smooth surface, like a ruby on Parian marble.

'There it is,' she said, putting her finger against the spot.

'It was dastardly of the woman,' said Clym. 'Will not Captain Vye get her punished?'

'He is gone from home on that very business. I did not know that I had such a magic reputation.'

'And you fainted?' said Clym, looking at the scarlet little puncture as if he would like to kiss it and make it well.

'Yes, it frightened me. I had not been to church for a long time. And now I shall not go again for ever so long—perhaps never. I cannot face their eyes after this. Don't you think it dreadfully humiliating? I wished I was dead for hours after, but I don't mind now.'

'I have come to clean away these cobwebs,' said Yeobright. 'Would you like to help me—by high class teaching? We might benefit them much.'

'I don't quite feel anxious to. I have not much love for my fellow-creatures. Sometimes I quite hate them.'

'Still I think that if you were to hear my scheme you might take an interest in it. There is no use in hating people—if you hate anything, you should hate what produced them.'

'Do you mean Nature? I hate her already. But I shall be glad to hear your scheme at any time.'

The situation had now worked itself out, and the next natural thing was for them to part. Clym knew this well enough, and Eustacia made a move of conclusion; yet he looked at her as if he had one word more to say. Perhaps if he had not lived in Paris it would never have been uttered.

'We have met before,' he said, regarding her with rather more interest than was necessary.

'I do not own it,' said Eustacia, with a repressed, still look.

'But I may think what I like.'

'Yes.'

'You are lonely here.'

'I cannot endure the heath, except in its purple season. The heath is a cruel taskmaster to me.'

'Can you say so?' he asked. 'To my mind it is most exhilarating, and strengthening, and soothing. I would rather live on these hills than anywhere else in the world.'

'It is well enough for artists; but I never would learn to draw.'

'And there is a very curious Druidical stone just out there.' He threw a pebble in the direction signified. 'Do you often go to see it?'

'I was not even aware that there existed any such curious Druidical stone. I am aware that there are Boulevards in Paris.'

Yeobright looked thoughtfully on the ground. 'That means much,' he said.

'It does indeed,' said Eustacia.

'I remember when I had the same longing for town bustle. Five years of a great city would be a perfect cure for that.'

'Heaven send me such a cure! Now, Mr. Yeobright, I will go indoors and plaster my wounded hand.'

They separated, and Eustacia vanished in the increasing shade. She seemed full of many things. Her past was a blank, her life had begun. The effect upon Clym of this meeting he did not fully discover till some time after. During his walk home his most intelligible sensation was that his scheme had somehow become glorified. A beautiful woman had been intertwined with it.

On reaching the house he went up to the room which was to be made his study, and occupied himself during the evening in unpacking his books from the boxes and arranging them on shelves. From another box he drew a lamp and a can of oil. He trimmed the lamp, arranged his table, and said, 'Now, I am ready to begin.'

He rose early the next morning, read two hours before breakfast by the light of his lamp—read all the morning, all the afternoon. Just when the sun was going down his eyes felt weary, and he leant back in his chair.

His room overlooked the front of the premises and the valley of the heath beyond. The lowest beams of the winter sun threw the shadow of the house over the palings, across the grass margin of the heath, and far up the vale, where the chimney outlines and those of the surrounding tree-tops stretched forth in long dark prongs. Having been seated at work all day, he decided to take a turn upon the hills before it got dark; and, going out forthwith, he struck across the heath towards Mistover.

It was an hour and a half later when he again appeared at the garden gate. The shutters of the house were closed, and Christian Cantle, who had been wheeling manure about the garden all day, had gone home. On entering he found that his mother, after waiting a long time for him, had finished her meal.

'Where have you been, Clym?' she immediately said. 'Why didn't you tell me that you were going away at this time?'

'I have been on the heath.'

'You'll meet Eustacia Vye if you go up there.'

Clym paused a minute. 'Yes, I met her this evening,' he said, as though it were spoken under the sheer necessity of preserving honesty.

'I wondered if you had.'

'It was no appointment.'

'No; such meetings never are.'

'But you are not angry, mother?'

'I can hardly say that I am not. Angry? No. But when I consider the usual nature of the drag which causes men of promise to disappoint the world I feel uneasy.'

'You deserve credit for the feeling, mother. But I can assure you that you need not be disturbed by it on my account.'

'When I think of you and your new crotchets,' said Mrs. Yeobright, with some emphasis, 'I naturally don't feel so comfortable as I did a twelvemonth ago. It is incredible to me that a man accustomed to the attractive women of Paris and elsewhere should be so easily worked upon by a girl in a heath. You could just as well have walked another way.'

'I had been studying all day.'

'Well, yes,' she added more hopefully, 'I have been thinking that you might get on as a schoolmaster, and rise that way, since you really are determined to hate the course you were pursuing.'

Yeobright was unwilling to disturb this idea, though his scheme was far enough removed from one wherein the education of youth should be made a mere channel of social ascent. He had no desires of that sort. He had reached the stage in a young man's life when the grimness of the general human situation first becomes clear; and the realization of this causes ambition to halt awhile. In France it is not uncustomary to commit suicide at this stage; in England we do much better, or much worse, as the case may be.

The love between the young man and his mother was strangely invisible now. Of love it may be said, the less earthly the less demonstrative. In its absolutely indestructible form it reaches a profundity in which all exhibition of itself is painful. It was so with these. Had conversations between them been overheard, people would have said, 'How cold they are to each other!'

His theory and his wishes about devoting his future to teaching had made an impression on Mrs. Yeobright. Indeed, how could it be otherwise when he was a part of her—when their discourses were as if carried on between the right and the left hands of the same body? He had despaired of reaching her by argument; and it was almost as a discovery to him that he could reach her by a magnetism which was as superior to words as words are to yells.

Strangely enough he began to feel now that it would not be so hard to persuade her who was his best friend that comparative poverty was essentially the higher course for him, as to reconcile to his feelings the act of persuading her. From every provident point of view his mother was so undoubtedly right, that he was not without a sickness of heart in finding he could shake her.

She had a singular insight into life, considering that she had never mixed with it. There are instances of persons who, without clear ideas of the things they criticize, have yet had clear ideas of the relations of those things. Blacklock, a poet blind from his birth, could describe visual objects with accuracy; Professor Sanderson, who was also blind, gave excellent lectures on colour, and taught others the theory of ideas which they had and he had not. In the social sphere these gifted ones are mostly women; they can watch a world which

they never saw, and estimate forces of which they have only heard. We call it intuition.

What was the great world to Mrs. Yeobright? A multitude whose tendencies could be perceived, though not its essences. Communities were seen by her as from a distance; she saw them as we see the throngs which cover the canvases of Sallaert, Van Alsloot, and others of that school—vast masses of beings, jostling, zigzagging, and processioning in definite directions, but whose features are indistinguishable by the very comprehensiveness of the view.

One could see that, as far as it had gone, her life was very complete on its reflective side. The philosophy of her nature, and its limitation by circumstances, was almost written in her movements. They had a majestic foundation, though they were far from being majestic; and they had a groundwork of assurance, but they were not assured. As her once elastic walk had become deadened by time, so had her natural pride of life been hindered in its blooming by her necessities.

The next slight touch in the shaping of Clym's destiny occurred a few days after. A barrow was opened on the heath, and Yeobright attended the operation, remaining away from his study during several hours. In the afternoon Christian returned from a journey in the same direction, and Mrs. Yeobright questioned him.

'They have dug a hole, and they have found things like flower-pots upside down, Mis'ess Yeobright; and inside these be real charnel bones. They have carried 'em off to men's houses; but I shouldn't like to sleep where they will bide. Dead folks have been known to come and claim their own. Mr. Yeobright had got one pot of the bones, and was going to bring 'em home—real skellington bones—but 'twas ordered otherwise. You'll be relieved to hear that he gave away his, pot and all, on second thoughts; and a blessed thing for ye, Mis'ess Yeobright, considering the wind o' nights.'

'Gave it away?'

'Yes. To Miss Vye. She has a cannibal taste for such churchyard furniture seemingly.'

'Miss Vye was there too?'

'Ay, 'a b'lieve she was.'

When Clym came home, which was shortly after, his mother said, in a curious tone, 'The urn you had meant for me you gave away.'

Yeobright made no reply; the current of her feeling was too pronounced to admit it.

The early weeks of the year passed on. Yeobright certainly studied at home, but he also walked much abroad, and the direction of his walk was always towards some point of a line between Mistover and Rainbarrow.

The month of March arrived, and the heath showed its first faint signs of awakening from winter trance. The awakening was almost feline in its stealthiness. The pool outside the bank by Eustacia's dwelling, which seemed as dead and desolate as ever to an observer who moved and made noises in his observation, would gradually disclose a state of great animation when

silently watched awhile. A timid animal world had come to life for the season. Little tadpoles and efts began to bubble up through the water, and to race along beneath it; toads made noises like very young ducks, and advanced to the margin in twos and threes; overhead, bumble-bees flew hither and thither in the thickening light, their drone coming and going like the sound of a gong.

On an evening such as this Yeobright descended into the Blooms-End valley from beside that very pool, where he had been standing with another person quite silently and quite long enough to hear all this puny stir of resurrection in nature; yet he had not heard it. His walk was rapid as he came down, and he went with a springy tread. Before entering upon his mother's premises he stopped and breathed. The light which shone forth on him from the window revealed that his face was flushed and his eye bright. What it did not show was something which lingered upon his lips like a seal set there. The abiding presence of this impress was so real that he hardly dared to enter the house, for it seemed as if his mother might say, 'What red spot is that glowing upon your mouth so vividly?'

But he entered soon after. The tea was ready, and he sat down opposite his mother. She did not speak many words; and as for him, something had been just done and some words had been just said on the hill which prevented him from beginning a desultory chat. His mother's taciturnity was not without ominousness, but he appeared not to care. He knew why she said so little, but he could not remove the cause of her bearing towards him. These half-silent sittings were far from uncommon with them now. At last Yeobright made a beginning of what was intended to strike at the whole root of the matter.

'Five days have we sat like this at meals with scarcely a word. What's the use of it, mother?'

'None,' said she, in a heart-swollen tone. 'But there is only too good a reason.'

'Not when you know all. I have been wanting to speak about this, and I am glad the subject is begun. The reason, of course, is Eustacia Vye. Well, I confess I have seen her lately, and have seen her a good many times.'

'Yes, yes; and I know what that amounts to. It troubles me, Clym. You are wasting your life here; and it is solely on account of her. If it had not been for that woman you would never have entertained this teaching scheme at all.'

Clym looked hard at his mother. 'You know that is not it,' he said.

'Well, I know you had decided to attempt it before you saw her; but that would have ended in intentions. It was very well to talk of, but ridiculous to put in practice. I fully expected that in the course of a month or two you would have seen the folly of such self-sacrifice, and would have been by this time back again to Paris in some business or other. I can understand objections to the diamond trade—I really was thinking that it might be inadequate to the life of a man like you even though it might have made you a million-

aire. But now I see how mistaken you are about this girl I doubt if you could be correct about other things.'

'How am I mistaken in her?'

'She is lazy and dissatisfied. But that is not all of it. Supposing her to be as good a woman as any you can find, which she certainly is not, why do you wish to connect yourself with anybody at present?'

'Well, there are practical reasons,' Clym began, and then almost broke off under an overpowering sense of the weight of argument which could be brought against his statement. 'If I take a school an educated woman would be invaluable as a help to me.'

'What! you really mean to marry her?'

'It would be premature to state that plainly. But consider what obvious advantages there would be in doing it. She——'

'Don't suppose she has any money. She hasn't a farthing.'

'She is excellently educated, and would make a good matron in a boarding-school. I candidly own that I have modified my views a little, in deference to you; and it should satisfy you. I no longer adhere to my intention of giving with my own mouth rudimentary education to the lowest class. I can do better. I can establish a good private school for farmers' sons, and without stopping the school I can manage to pass examinations. By this means, and by the assistance of a wife like her——'

'O, Clym!'

'I shall ultimately, I hope, be at the head of one of the best schools in the country.'

Yeobright had enunciated the word 'her' with a fervour which, in conversation with a mother, was absurdly indiscreet. Hardly a maternal heart within the four seas could, in such circumstances, have helped being irritated at that ill-timed betrayal of feeling for a new woman.

'You are blinded, Clym,' she said warmly. 'It was a bad day for you when you first set eyes on her. And your scheme is merely a castle in the air built on purpose to justify this folly which has seized you, and to salve your conscience on the irrational situation you are in.'

'Mother, that's not true,' he firmly answered.

'Can you maintain that I sit and tell untruths, when all I wish to do is to save you from sorrow? For shame, Clym! But it is all through that woman—a hussy!'

Clym reddened like fire, and rose. He placed his hand upon his mother's shoulder and said, in a tone which hung strangely between entreaty and command, 'I won't hear it. I may be led to answer you in a way which we shall both regret.'

His mother parted her lips to begin some other vehement truth, but on looking at him she saw that in his face which led her to leave the words unsaid. Yeobright walked once or twice across the room, and then suddenly went out of the house. It was eleven o'clock when he came in, though he had not been further than the precincts of the garden. His mother was gone to

bed. A light was left burning on the table, and supper was spread. Without partaking of any food he secured the doors and went upstairs.

IV. AN HOUR OF BLISS AND MANY HOURS OF SADNESS

THE next day was gloomy enough at Blooms-End. Yeobright remained in his study, sitting over the open books; but the work of those hours was miserably scant. Determined that there should be nothing in his conduct towards his mother resembling sullenness, he had occasionally spoken to her on passing matters, and would take no notice of the brevity of her replies. With the same resolve to keep up a show of conversation he said, about seven o'clock in the evening, 'There's an eclipse of the moon to-night. I am going out to see it.' And, putting on his overcoat, he left her.

The low moon was not as yet visible from the front of the house, and Yeobright climbed out of the valley until he stood in the full flood of her light. But even now he walked on, and his steps were in the direction of Rainbarrow.

In half an hour he stood at the top. The sky was clear from verge to verge, and the moon flung her rays over the whole heath, but without sensibly lighting it, except where paths and water-courses had laid bare the white flints and glistening quartz sand, which made streaks upon the general shade. After standing awhile he stooped and felt the heather. It was dry, and he flung himself down upon the barrow, his face towards the moon, which depicted a small image of herself in each of his eyes.

He had often come up here without stating his purpose to his mother; but this was the first time that he had been ostensibly frank as to his purpose while really concealing it. It was a moral situation which, three months earlier, he could hardly have credited of himself. In returning to labour in this sequestered spot he had anticipated an escape from the chafing of social necessities; yet behold they were here also. More than ever he longed to be in some world where personal ambition was not the only recognized form of progress—such, perhaps, as might have been the case at some time or other in the silvery globe then shining upon him. His eye travelled over the length and breadth of that distant country—over the Bay of Rainbows, the sombre Sea of Crises, the Ocean of Storms, the Lake of Dreams, the vast Walled Plains, and the wondrous Ring Mountains—till he almost felt himself to be voyaging bodily through its wild scenes, standing on its hollow hills, traversing its deserts, descending its vales and old sea bottoms, or mounting to the edges of its craters.

While he watched the far-removed landscape a tawny stain grew into being on the lower verge: the eclipse had begun. This marked a preconcerted moment: for the remote celestial phenomenon had been pressed into sub-lunary service as a lover's signal. Yeobright's mind flew back to earth at the

sight; he arose, shook himself, and listened. Minute after minute passed by, perhaps ten minutes passed, and the shadow on the moon perceptibly widened. He heard a rustling on his left hand, a cloaked figure with an upturned face appeared at the base of the Barrow, and Clym descended. In a moment the figure was in his arms, and his lips upon hers.

'My Eustacia!'

'Clym, dearest!'

Such a situation had less than three months brought forth.

They remained long without a single utterance, for no language could reach the level of their condition: words were as the rusty implements of a bygone barbarous speech, and only to be occasionally tolerated.

'I began to wonder why you did not come,' said Yeobright, when she had withdrawn a little from his embrace.

'You said ten minutes after the first mark of shade on the edge of the moon; and that's what it is now.'

'Well, let us only think that here we are.'

Then, holding each other's hand, they were again silent, and the shadow on the moon's disc grew a little larger.

'Has it seemed long since you last saw me?' she asked.

'It has seemed sad.'

'And not long?' That's because you occupy yourself, and so blind yourself to my absence. To me, who can do nothing, it has been like living under stagnant water.'

'I would rather bear tediousness, dear, than have time made short by the means that mine has been shortened.'

'In what way is that? You have been thinking you wished you did not love me.'

'How can a man wish that, and yet love on? No, Eustacia.'

'Men can, women cannot.'

'Well, whatever I may have thought, one thing is certain—I do love you—past all compass and description. I love you to oppressiveness—I, who have never before felt more than a pleasant passing fancy for any woman I have ever seen. Let me look right into your moonlit face, and dwell on every line and curve in it! Only a few hair-breadths make the difference between this face and faces I have seen many times before I knew you; yet what a difference—the difference between everything and nothing at all. One touch on that mouth again! there, and there, and there. Your eyes seem heavy, Eustacia.'

'No, it is my general way of looking. I think it arises from my feeling sometimes an agonizing pity for myself that I ever was born.'

'You don't feel it now?'

'No. Yet I know that we shall not love like this always. Nothing can insure the continuance of love. It will evaporate like a spirit, and so I feel full of fears.'

'You need not.'

'Ah, you don't know. You have seen more than I, and have been into cities and among people that I have only heard of, and have lived more years than I; but yet I am older at this than you. I loved another man once, and now I love you.'

'In God's mercy don't talk so, Eustacia!'

'But I do not think I shall be the one who wearies first. It will, I fear, end in this way: your mother will find out that you meet me, and she will influence you against me!'

'That can never be. She knows of these meetings already.'

'And she speaks against me?'

'I will not say.'

'There, go away! Obey her. I shall ruin you. It is foolish of you to meet me like this. Kiss me, and go away for ever. For ever—do you hear?—for ever!'

'Not I.'

'It is your only chance. Many a man's love has been a curse to him.'

'You are desperate, full of fancies, and wilful; and you misunderstand. I have an additional reason for seeing you to-night besides love of you. For though, unlike you, I feel our affection may be eternal, I feel with you in this, that our present mode of existence cannot last.'

'O! 'tis your mother. Yes, that's it! I knew it.'

'Never mind what it is. Believe this, I cannot let myself lose you. I must have you always with me. This very evening I do not like to let you go. There is only one cure for this anxiety, dearest—you must be my wife.'

She started: then endeavoured to say calmly, 'Cynics say that cures the anxiety by curing the love.'

'But you must answer me. Shall I claim you some day—I don't mean at once?'

'I must think,' Eustacia murmured. 'At present speak of Paris to me. Is there any place like it on earth?'

'It is very beautiful. But will you be mine?'

'I will be nobody else's in the world—does that satisfy you?'

'Yes, for the present.'

'Now tell me of the Tuileries, and the Louvre,' she continued evasively.

'I hate talking of Paris! Well, I remember one sunny room in the Louvre which would make a fitting place for you to live in—the Galerie d'Apollon. Its windows are mainly east; and in the early morning, when the sun is bright, the whole apartment is in a perfect blaze of splendour. The rays bristle and dart from the encrustations of gilding to the magnificent inlaid coffers, from the coffers to the gold and silver plate, from the plate to the jewels and precious stones, from these to the enamels, till there is a perfect network of light which quite dazzles the eye. But now, about our marriage—'

'And Versailles—the King's Gallery is some such gorgeous room, is it not?'

'Yes. But what's the use of talking of gorgeous rooms? By the way, the

Little Trianon would suit us beautifully to live in, and you might walk in the gardens in the moonlight and think you were in some English shrubbery; it is laid out in English fashion.'

'I should hate to think that!'

'Then you could keep to the lawn in front of the Grand Palace. All about there you would doubtless feel in a world of historical romance.'

He went on, since it was all new to her, and described Fontainebleau, St. Cloud, the Bois, and many other familiar haunts of the Parisians; till she said—

'When used you to go to these places?'

'On Sundays.'

'Ah, yes. I dislike English Sundays. How I should chime in with their manners over there! Dear Clym, you'll go back again?'

Clym shook his head, and looked at the eclipse.

'If you'll go back again I'll—be something,' she said tenderly, putting her head near his breast. 'If you'll agree I'll give my promise, without making you wait a minute longer.'

'How extraordinary that you and my mother should be of one mind about this!' said Yeobright. 'I have vowed not to go back, Eustacia. It is not the place I dislike; it is the occupation.'

'But you can go in some other capacity.'

'No. Besides, it would interfere with my scheme. Don't press that, Eustacia. Will you marry me?'

'I cannot tell.'

'Now—never mind Paris; it is no better than other spots. Promise, sweet!'

'You will never adhere to your education plan, I am quite sure; and then it will be all right for me; and so I promise to be yours for ever and ever.'

Clym brought her face towards his by a gentle pressure of the hand, and kissed her.

'Ah! but you don't know what you have got in me,' she said. 'Sometimes I think there is not that in Eustacia Vye which will make a good homespun wife. Wait, let it go—see how our time is slipping, slipping, slipping!' She pointed towards the half eclipsed moon.

'You are too mournful.'

'No. Only I dread to think of anything beyond the present. What is, we know. We are together now, and it is unknown how long we shall be so: the unknown always fills my mind with terrible possibilities, even when I may reasonably expect it to be cheerful. . . . Clym, the eclipsed moonlight shines upon your face with a strange foreign colour, and shows its shape as if it were cut out in gold. That means that you should be doing better things than this.'

'You are ambitious, Eustacia—no, not exactly ambitious, luxurious. I ought to be of the same vein, to make you happy, I suppose. And yet, far from that, I could live and die in a hermitage here, with proper work to do.'

There was that in his tone which implied distrust of his position as a

solicitous lover, a doubt if he were acting fairly towards one whose tastes touched his own only at rare and infrequent points. She saw his meaning, and whispered, in a low, full accent of eager assurance, 'Don't mistake me, Clym: though I should like Paris, I love you for yourself alone. To be your wife and live in Paris would be heaven to me; but I would rather live with you in a hermitage here than not be yours at all. It is gain to me either way, and very great gain. There's my too candid confession.'

'Spoken like a woman. And now I must soon leave you. I'll walk with you towards your house.'

'But must you go home yet?' she asked. 'Yes, the sand has nearly slipped away, I see, and the eclipse is creeping on more and more. Don't go yet! Stop till the hour has run itself out; then I will not press you any more. You will go home and sleep well; I keep sighing in my sleep! Do you ever dream of me?'

'I cannot recollect a clear dream of you.'

'I see your face in every scene of my dreams, and hear your voice in every sound. I wish I did not. It is too much what I feel. They say such love never lasts. But it must! And yet once, I remember, I saw an officer of the Hussars ride down the street at Budmouth, and though he was a total stranger and never spoke to me, I loved him till I thought I should really die of love—but I didn't die, and at last I left off caring for him. How terrible it would be if a time should come when I could not love you, my Clym!'

'Please don't say such reckless things. When we see such a time at hand we will say, "I have outlived my faith and purpose," and die. There, the hour has expired: now let us walk on.'

Hand in hand they went along the path towards Mistover. When they were near the house he said, 'It is too late for me to see your grandfather to-night. Do you think he will object to it?'

'I will speak to him. I am so accustomed to be my own mistress that it did not occur to me that we should have to ask him.'

Then they lingeringly separated, and Clym descended towards Blooms-End.

And as he walked further and further from the charmed atmosphere of his Olympian girl his face grew sad with a new sort of sadness. A perception of the dilemma in which his love had placed him came back in full force. In spite of Eustacia's apparent willingness to wait through the period of an unpromising engagement, till he should be established in his new pursuit, he could not but perceive at moments that she loved him rather as a visitant from a gay world to which she rightly belonged than as a man with a purpose opposed to that recent past of his which so interested her. Often at their meetings a word or a sigh escaped her. It meant that, though she made no conditions as to his return to the French capital, this was what she secretly longed for in the event of marriage; and it robbed him of many an otherwise pleasant hour. Along with that came the widening breach between himself

and his mother. Whenever any little occurrence had brought into more prominence than usual the disappointment that he was causing her it had sent him on lone and moody walks; or he was kept awake a great part of the night by the turmoil of spirit which such a recognition created. If Mrs. Yeobright could only have been led to see what a sound and worthy purpose this purpose of his was and how little it was being affected by his devotion to Eustacia, how differently would she regard him!

Thus as his sight grew accustomed to the first blinding halo kindled about him by love and beauty, Yeobright began to perceive what a strait he was in. Sometimes he wished that he had never known Eustacia, immediately to retract the wish as brutal. Three antagonistic growths had to be kept alive; his mother's trust in him, his plan for becoming a teacher, and Eustacia's happiness. His fervid nature could not afford to relinquish one of these, though two of the three were as many as he could hope to preserve. Though his love was as chaste as that of Petrarch for his Laura, it had made fetters of what previously was only a difficulty. A position which was not too simple when he stood whole-hearted had become indescribably complicated by the addition of Eustacia. Just when his mother was beginning to tolerate one scheme he had introduced another still bitterer than the first, and the combination was more than she could bear.

V. SHARP WORDS ARE SPOKEN AND A CRISIS ENSUES

WHEN Yeobright was not with Eustacia he was sitting slavishly over his books; when he was not reading he was meeting her. These meetings were carried on with the greatest secrecy.

One afternoon his mother came home from a morning visit to Thomasin. He could see from a disturbance in the lines of her face that something had happened.

'I have been told an incomprehensible thing,' she said mournfully. 'The captain has let out at the Woman that you and Eustacia Vye are engaged to be married.'

'We are,' said Yeobright. 'But it may not be yet for a very long time.'

'I should hardly think it *would* be yet for a very long time! You will take her to Paris, I suppose?' She spoke with weary hopelessness.

'I am not going back to Paris.'

'What will you do with a wife, then?'

'Keep a school in Budmouth, as I have told you.'

'That's incredible! The place is overrun with schoolmasters. You have no special qualifications. What possible chance is there for such as you?'

'There is no chance of getting rich. But with my system of education, which is as new as it is true, I shall do a great deal of good to my fellow-creatures.'

'Dreams, dreams! If there had been any system left to be invented they would have found it out at the universities long before this time.'

'Never, mother. They cannot find it out, because their teachers don't come in contact with the class which demands such a system—that is, those who have had no preliminary training. My plan is one for instilling high knowledge into empty minds without first cramming them with what has to be uncrammed again before true study begins.'

'I might have believed you if you had kept yourself free from entanglements; but this woman—if she had been a good girl it would have been bad enough; but being——'

'She is a good girl.'

'So you think. A foreign bandmaster's daughter! What has her life been? Her surname even is not her true one.'

'She is Captain Vye's granddaughter, and her father merely took her mother's name. And she is a lady by instinct.'

'They call him "captain," but anybody is captain.'

'He was in the Royal Navy!'

'No doubt he has been to sea in some tub or other. Why doesn't he look after her? No lady would rove about the heath at all hours of the day and night as she does. But that's not all of it. There was something queer between her and Thomasin's husband at one time—I am as sure of it as that I stand here.'

'Eustacia has told me. He did pay her a little attention a year ago; but there's no harm in that. I like her all the better.'

'Clym,' said his mother with firmness, 'I have no proofs against her, unfortunately. But if she makes you a good wife, there has never been a bad one.'

'Believe me, you are almost exasperating,' said Yeobright vehemently. 'And this very day I had intended to arrange a meeting between you. But you give me no peace; you try to thwart my wishes in everything.'

'I hate the thought of any son of mine marrying badly! I wish I had never lived to see this; it is too much for me—it is more than I thought!' She turned to the window. Her breath was coming quickly, and her lips were pale, parted, and trembling.

'Mother,' said Clym, 'whatever you do, you will always be dear to me—that you know. But one thing I have a right to say, which is, that at my age I am old enough to know what is best for me.'

Mrs. Yeobright remained for some time silent and shaken, as if she could say no more. Then she replied, 'Best? Is it best for you to injure your prospects for such a voluptuous, idle woman as that? Don't you see that by the very fact of your choosing her you prove that you do not know what is best for you? You give up your whole thought—you set your whole soul—to please a woman.'

'I do. And that woman is you.'

'How can you treat me so flippantly!' said his mother, turning again to him with a tearful look. 'You are unnatural, Clym, and I did not expect it.'

'Very likely,' said he cheerlessly. 'You did not know the measure you were going to mete me, and therefore did not know the measure that would be returned to you again.'

'You answer me; you think only of her. You stick to her in all things.'

'That proves her to be worthy. I have never yet supported what is bad. And I do not care only for her. I care for you and for myself, and for anything that is good. When a woman once dislikes another she is merciless!'

'O Clym! please don't go setting down as my fault what is your obstinate wrong-headedness. If you wished to connect yourself with an unworthy person why did you come home here to do it? Why didn't you do it in Paris?—it is more the fashion there. You have come only to distress me, a lonely woman, and shorten my days! I wish that you would bestow your presence where you bestow your love!'

Clym said huskily, 'You are my mother. I will say no more—beyond this, that I beg your pardon for having thought this my home. I will no longer inflict myself upon you; I'll go.' And he went out with tears in his eyes.

It was a sunny afternoon at the beginning of summer, and the moist hollows of the heath had passed from their brown to their green stage. Yeobright walked to the edge of the basin which extended down from Mistover and Rainbarrow. By this time he was calm, and he looked over the landscape. In the minor valleys, between the hillocks which diversified the contour of the vale, the fresh young ferns were luxuriantly growing up, ultimately to reach a height of five or six feet. He descended a little way, flung himself down in a spot where a path emerged from one of the small hollows, and waited. Hither it was that he had promised Eustacia to bring his mother this afternoon, that they might meet and be friends. His attempt had utterly failed.

He was in a nest of vivid green. The ferny vegetation round him, though so abundant, was quite uniform: it was a grove of machine-made foliage, a world of green triangles with saw-edges, and not a single flower. The air was warm with vaporous warmth, and the stillness was unbroken. Lizards, grasshoppers, and ants were the only living things to be beheld. The scene seemed to belong to the ancient world of the carboniferous period, when the forms of plants were few, and of the fern kind; when there was neither bud nor blossom, nothing but a monotonous extent of leafage, amid which no bird sang.

When he had reclined for some considerable time, gloomily pondering, he discerned above the ferns a drawn bonnet of white silk approaching from the left, and Yeobright knew directly that it covered the head of her he loved. His heart awoke from its apathy to a warm excitement, and, jumping to his feet, he said aloud, 'I knew she was sure to come.'

She vanished in a hollow for a few moments, and then her whole form unfolded itself from the brake.

'Only you here?' she exclaimed, with a disappointed air, whose hollowness was proved by her rising redness and her half-guilty low laugh. 'Where is Mrs. Yeobright?'

'She has not come,' he replied in a subdued tone.

'I wish I had known that you would be here alone,' she said seriously, 'and that we were going to have such an idle, pleasant time as this. Pleasure not known beforehand is half wasted; to anticipate it is to double it. I have not thought once to-day of having you all to myself this afternoon, and the actual moment of a thing is soon gone.'

'It is indeed.'

'Poor Clym!' she continued, looking tenderly into his face. 'You are sad. Something has happened at your home. Never mind what is—let us only look at what seems.'

'But, darling, what shall we do?' said he.

'Still go on as we do now—just live on from meeting to meeting, never minding about another day. You, I know, are always thinking of that—I can see you are. But you must not—will you, dear Clym?'

'You are just like all women. They are ever content to build their lives on any incidental position that offers itself; whilst men would fain make a globe to suit them. Listen to this, Eustacia. There is a subject I have determined to put off no longer. Your sentiment on the wisdom of *Carpe diem* does not impress me to-day. Our present mode of life must shortly be brought to an end.'

'It is your mother!'

'It is. I love you none the less in telling you; it is only right you should know.'

'I have feared my bliss,' she said, with the merest motion of her lips. 'It has been too intense and consuming.'

'There is hope yet. There are forty years of work in me yet, and why should you despair? I am only at an awkward turning. I wish people wouldn't be so ready to think that there is no progress without uniformity.'

'Ah—your mind runs off to the philosophical side of it. Well, these sad and hopeless obstacles are welcome in one sense, for they enable us to look with indifference upon the cruel satires that Fate loves to indulge in. I have heard of people, who, upon coming suddenly into happiness, have died from anxiety lest they should not live to enjoy it. I felt myself in that whimsical state of uneasiness lately; but I shall be spared it now. Let us walk on.'

Clym took the hand which was already bared for him—it was a favourite way with them to walk bare hand in bare hand—and led her through the ferns. They formed a very comely picture of love at full flush, as they walked along the valley that late afternoon, the sun sloping down on their right, and throwing their thin spectral shadows, tall as poplar trees, far out across the furze and fern. Eustacia went with her head thrown back fancifully, a certain glad and voluptuous air of triumph pervading her eyes at having won by her own unaided self a man who was her perfect complement in attain-

ments, appearance, and age. On the young man's part, the paleness of face which he had brought with him from Paris, and the incipient marks of time and thought, were less perceptible than when he returned, the healthful and energetic sturdiness which was his by nature having partially recovered its original proportions. They wandered onward till they reached the nether margin of the heath, where it became marshy, and merged in moorland.

'I must part from you here, Clym,' said Eustacia.

They stood still and prepared to bid each other farewell. Everything before them was on a perfect level. The sun, resting on the horizon line, streamed across the ground from between copper-coloured and lilac clouds, stretched out in flats beneath a sky of pale soft green. All dark objects on the earth that lay towards the sun were overspread by a purple haze, against which groups of wailing gnats shone out, rising upwards and dancing about like sparks of fire.

'O! this leaving you is too hard to bear!' exclaimed Eustacia in a sudden whisper of anguish. 'Your mother will influence you too much; I shall not be judged fairly, it will get afloat that I am not a good girl, and the witch story will be added to make me blacker!'

'They cannot. Nobody dares to speak disrespectfully of you or of me.'

'O how I wish I was sure of never losing you—that you could not be able to desert me anyhow!'

Clym stood silent a moment. His feelings were high, the moment was passionate, and he cut the knot.

'You shall be sure of me, darling,' he said, folding her in his arms. 'We will be married at once.'

'O Clym!'

'Do you agree to it?'

'If—if we can.'

'We certainly can, both being of full age. And I have not followed my occupation all these years without having accumulated money; and if you will agree to live in a tiny cottage somewhere on the heath, until I take a house in Budmouth for the school, we can do it at a very little expense.'

'How long shall we have to live in the tiny cottage, Clym?'

'About six months. At the end of that time I shall have finished my reading—yes, we will do it, and this heart-aching will be over. We shall, of course, live in absolute seclusion, and our married life will only begin to outward view when we take the house in Budmouth, where I have already addressed a letter on the matter. Would your grandfather allow you?'

'I think he would—on the understanding that it should not last longer than six months.'

'I will guarantee that, if no misfortune happens.'

'If no misfortune happens,' she repeated slowly.

'Which is not likely. Dearest, fix the exact day.'

And then they consulted on the question, and the day was chosen. It was to be a fortnight from that time.

This was the end of their talk, and Eustacia left him. Clym watched her as she retired towards the sun. The luminous rays wrapped her up with her increasing distance, and the rustle of her dress over the sprouting sedge and grass died away. As he watched, the dead flat of the scenery overpowered him, though he was fully alive to the beauty of that untarnished early summer green which was worn for the nonce by the poorest blade. There was something in its oppressive horizontality which too much reminded him of the arena of life; it gave him a sense of bare equality with, and no superiority to, a single living thing under the sun.

Eustacia was now no longer the goddess but the woman to him, a being to fight for, support, help, be maligned for. Now that he had reached a cooler moment he would have preferred a less hasty marriage; but the card was laid, and he determined to abide by the game. Whether Eustacia was to add one other to the list of those who love too hotly to love long and well, the forthcoming event was certainly a ready way of proving.

VI, YEOBRIGHT GOES, AND THE BREACH IS COMPLETE

ALL that evening smart sounds denoting an active packing up came from Yeobright's room to the ears of his mother downstairs.

Next morning he departed from the house and again proceeded across the heath. A long day's march was before him, his object being to secure a dwelling to which he might take Eustacia when she became his wife. Such a house, small, secluded, and with its windows boarded up, he had casually observed a month earlier, near a village about five miles off; and thither he directed his steps to-day.

The weather was far different from that of the evening before. The yellow and vapoury sunset which had wrapped up Eustacia from his parting gaze had presaged change. It was one of those not infrequent days of an English June which are as wet and boisterous as November. The cold clouds hastened on in a body, as if painted on a moving slide. Vapours from other continents arrived upon the wind, which curled and parted round him as he walked on.

At length Clym reached the margin of a fir and beech plantation that had been enclosed from heath land in the year of his birth. Here the trees, laden heavily with their new and humid leaves, were now suffering more damage than during the highest winds of winter, when the boughs are specially disencumbered to do battle with the storm. The wet young beeches were undergoing amputations, bruises, cripplings, and harsh lacerations, from which the wasting sap would bleed for many a day to come, and which would leave scars visible till the day of their burning. Each stem was wrenched at the root, where it moved like a bone in its socket, and at every onset of the gale convulsive sounds came from the branches, as if pain were felt. In a neighbouring brake a finch was trying to sing; but the wind blew under his feathers

till they stood on end, twisted round his little tail, and made him give up his song.

Yet a few yards to Yeobright's left, on the open heath, how ineffectively gnashed the storm! Those gusts which tore the trees merely waved the furze and heather in a light caress. Egdon was made for such times as these.

Yeobright reached the empty house about mid-day. It was almost as lonely as that of Eustacia's grandfather, but the fact that it stood near a heath was disguised by a belt of firs which almost enclosed the premises. He journeyed on about a mile further to the village in which the owner lived, and, returning with him to the house, arrangements were completed, and the man undertook that one room at least should be ready for occupation the next day. Clym's intention was to live there alone until Eustacia should join him on their wedding-day.

Then he turned to pursue his way homeward through the drizzle that had so greatly transformed the scene. The ferns, among which he had lain in comfort yesterday, were dripping moisture from every frond, wetting his legs through as he brushed past; and the fur of the rabbits leaping around him was clotted into dark locks by the same watery surrounding.

He reached home damp and weary enough after his ten-mile walk. It had hardly been a propitious beginning, but he had chosen his course, and would show no swerving. The evening and the following morning were spent in concluding arrangements for his departure. To stay at home a minute longer than necessary after having once come to his determination would be, he felt, only to give new pain to his mother by some word, look, or deed.

He had hired a conveyance and sent off his goods by two o'clock that day. The next step was to get some furniture, which, after serving for temporary use in the cottage, would be available for the house at Budmouth when increased by goods of a better description. A mart extensive enough for the purpose existed at Anglebury, some miles beyond the spot chosen for his residence, and there he resolved to pass the coming night.

It now only remained to wish his mother good-bye. She was sitting by the window as usual when he came downstairs.

'Mother, I am going to leave you,' he said, holding out his hand.

'I thought you were, by your packing,' replied Mrs. Yeobright in a voice from which every particle of emotion was painfully excluded.

'And you will part friends with me?'

'Certainly, Clym.'

'I am going to be married on the twenty-fifth.'

'I thought you were going to be married.'

'And then—and then you must come and see us. You will understand me better after that, and our situation will not be so wretched as it is now.'

'I do not think it likely I shall come to see you.'

'Then it will not be my fault or Eustacia's, mother. Good-bye!'

He kissed her cheek, and departed in great misery, which was several hours in lessening itself to a controllable level. The position had been such

that nothing more could be said without, in the first place, breaking down a barrier; and that was not to be done.

No sooner had Yeobright gone from his mother's house than her face changed its rigid aspect for one of blank despair. After a while she wept, and her tears brought some relief. During the rest of the day she did nothing but walk up and down the garden path in a state bordering on stupefaction. Night came, and with it but little rest. The next day, with an instinct to do something which should reduce prostration to mournfulness, she went to her son's room, and with her own hands arranged it in order, for an imaginary time when he should return again. She gave some attention to her flowers, but it was perfunctorily bestowed, for they no longer charmed her.

It was a great relief when, early in the afternoon, Thomasin paid her an unexpected visit. This was not the first meeting between the relatives since Thomasin's marriage; and past blunders having been in a rough way rectified, they could always greet each other with pleasure and ease.

The oblique band of sunlight which followed her through the door became the young wife well. It illuminated her as her presence illuminated the heath. In her movements, in her gaze, she reminded the beholder of the feathered creatures who lived around her home. All similes and allegories concerning her began and ended with birds. There was as much variety in her motions as in their flight. When she was musing she was a kestrel, which hangs in the air by an invisible motion of its wings. When she was in a high wind her light body was blown against trees and banks like a heron's. When she was frightened she darted noiselessly like a kingfisher. When she was serene she skimmed like a swallow, and that is how she was moving now.

'You are looking very blithe, upon my word, Tamsie,' said Mrs. Yeobright, with a sad smile. 'How is Damon?'

'He is very well.'

'Is he kind to you, Thomasin?' And Mrs. Yeobright observed her narrowly.

'Pretty fairly.'

'Is that honestly said?'

'Yes, aunt. I would tell you if he were unkind.' She added, blushing, and with hesitation, 'He—I don't know if I ought to complain to you about this, but I am not quite sure what to do. I want some money, you know, aunt—some to buy little things for myself—and he doesn't give me any. I don't like to ask him; and yet, perhaps, he doesn't give it me because he doesn't know. Ought I to mention it to him, aunt?'

'Of course you ought. Have you never said a word on the matter?'

'You see, I had some of my own,' said Thomasin evasively; 'and I have not wanted any of his until lately. I did just say something about it last week; but he seems—not to remember.'

'He must be made to remember. You are aware that I have a little box full of spade-guineas, which your uncle put into my hands to divide between

yourself and Clym whenever I chose. Perhaps the time has come when it should be done. They can be turned into sovereigns at any moment.'

'I think I should like to have my share—that is, if you don't mind.'

'You shall, if necessary. But it is only proper that you should first tell your husband distinctly that you are without any, and see what he will do.'

'Very well, I will. . . . Aunt, I have heard about Clym. I know you are in trouble about him, and that's why I have come.'

Mrs. Yeobright turned away, and her features worked in her attempt to conceal her feelings. Then she ceased to make any attempt, and said, weeping, 'O Thomasin, do you think he hates me? How can he bear to grieve me so, when I have lived only for him through all these years?'

'Hate you—no,' said Thomasin soothingly. 'It is only that he loves her too well. Look at it quietly—do. It is not so very bad of him. Do you know, I thought it not the worst match he could have made. Miss Vye's family is a good one on her mother's side; and her father was a romantic wanderer—a sort of Greek Ulysses.'

'It is no use, Thomasin; it is no use. Your intention is good; but I will not trouble you to argue. I have gone through the whole that can be said on either side times, and many times. Clym and I have not parted in anger; we have parted in a worse way. It is not a passionate quarrel that would have broken my heart; it is the steady opposition and persistence in going wrong that he has shown. O Thomasin, he was so good as a little boy—so tender and kind!'

'He was, I know.'

'I did not think one whom I called mine would grow up to treat me like this. He spoke to me as if I opposed him to injure him. As though I could wish him ill!'

'There are worse women in the world than Eustacia Vye.'

'There are too many better; that's the agony of it. It was she, Thomasin, and she only, who led your husband to act as he did: I would swear it!'

'No,' said Thomasin eagerly. 'It was before he knew me that he thought of her, and it was nothing but a mere flirtation.'

'Very well; we will let it be so. There is little use in unravelling that now. Sons must be blind if they will. Why is it that a woman can see from a distance what a man cannot see close? Clym must do as he will—he is nothing more to me. And this is maternity—to give one's best years and best love to ensure the fate of being despised!'

'You are too unyielding. Think how many mothers there are whose sons have brought them to public shame by real crimes before you feel so deeply a case like this.'

'Thomasin, don't lecture me—I can't have it. It is the excess above what we expect that makes the force of the blow, and that may not be greater in their case than in mine: they may have foreseen the worst. . . . I am wrongly made, Thomasin,' she added, with a mournful smile. 'Some widows can guard against the wounds their children give them by turning their hearts to

another husband and beginning life again. But I always was a poor, weak, one-idea'd creature—I had not the compass of heart nor the enterprise for that. Just as forlorn and stupefied as I was when my husband's spirit flew away I have sat ever since—never attempting to mend matters at all. I was comparatively a young woman then, and I might have had another family by this time, and have been comforted by them for the failure of this one son.'

'It is more noble in you that you did not.'

'The more noble, the less wise.'

'Forget it, and be soothed, dear aunt. And I shall not leave you alone for long. I shall come and see you every day.'

And for one week Thomasin literally fulfilled her word. She endeavoured to make light of the wedding; and brought news of the preparations, and that she was invited to be present. The next week she was rather unwell, and did not appear. Nothing had as yet been done about the guineas, for Thomasin feared to address her husband again on the subject, and Mrs. Yeobright had insisted upon this.

One day just before this time, Wildeve was standing at the door of the Quiet Woman. In addition to the upward path through the heath to Rainbarrow and Mistover, there was a road which branched from the highway a short distance below the inn, and ascended to Mistover by a circuitous and easy incline. This was the only route on this side for vehicles to the captain's retreat. A light cart from the nearest town descended the road, and the lad who was driving pulled up in front of the inn for something to drink.

'You come from Mistover?' said Wildeve.

'Yes. They are taking in good things up there. Going to be a wedding.' And the driver buried his face in his mug.

Wildeve had not received an inkling of the fact before, and a sudden expression of pain overspread his face. He turned for a moment into the passage to hide it. Then he came back again.

'Do you mean Miss Vye?' he said. 'How is it—that she can be married so soon?'

'By the will of God and a ready young man, I suppose.'

'You don't mean Mr. Yeobright?'

'Yes. He has been creeping about with her all the spring.'

'I suppose—she was immensely taken with him?'

'She is crazy about him, so their general servant of all work tells me. And that lad Charley that looks after the horse is all in a daze about it. The stun-poll has got fond-like of her.'

'Is she lively—is she glad? Going to be married so soon—well!'

'It isn't so very soon.'

'No; not so very soon.'

Wildeve went indoors to the empty room, a curious heart-ache within him. He rested his elbow upon the mantelpiece and his face upon his hand. When Thomasin entered the room he did not tell her of what he had heard. The old

longing for Eustacia had reappeared in his soul: and it was mainly because he had discovered that it was another man's intention to possess her.

To be yearning for the difficult, to be weary of that offered; to care for the remote, to dislike the near; it was Wildeve's nature always. This is the true mark of the man of sentiment. Though Wildeve's fevered feeling had not been elaborated to real poetical compass, it was of the standard sort. He might have been called the Rousseau of Egdon.

VII. THE MORNING AND THE EVENING OF A DAY

THE wedding morning came. Nobody would have imagined from appearances that Blooms-End had any interest in Mistover that day. A solemn stillness prevailed around the house of Clym's mother, and there was no more animation indoors. Mrs. Yeobright, who had declined to attend the ceremony, sat by the breakfast-table in the old room which communicated immediately with the porch, her eyes listlessly directed towards the open door. It was the room in which, six months earlier, the merry Christmas party had met, to which Eustacia came secretly and as a stranger. The only living thing that entered now was a sparrow; and seeing no movements to cause alarm, he hopped boldly round the room, endeavoured to go out by the window, and fluttered among the pot-flowers. This roused the lonely sitter, who got up, released the bird, and went to the door. She was expecting Thomasin, who had written the night before to state that the time had come when she would wish to have the money, and that she would if possible call this day.

Yet Thomasin occupied Mrs. Yeobright's thoughts but slightly as she looked up the valley of the heath alive with butterflies, and with grasshoppers whose husky noises on every side formed a whispered chorus. A domestic drama, for which the preparations were now being made a mile or two off, was but little less vividly present to her eyes than if enacted before her. She tried to dismiss the vision, and walked about the garden-plot; but her eyes ever and anon sought out the direction of the parish church to which Mistover belonged, and her excited fancy clove the hills which divided the building from her eyes. The morning wore away. Eleven o'clock struck: could it be that the wedding was then in progress? It must be so. She went on imagining the scene at the church to which he had by this time taken his bride. She pictured the little group of children by the gate as the pony-carriage drove up, in which, as Thomasin had learnt, they were going to perform the short journey. Then she saw them enter and proceed to the chancel and kneel; and the service seemed to go on.

She covered her face with her hands. 'O, it is a mistake!' she groaned. 'And he will rue it some day, and think of me!'

While she remained thus, overcome by her forebodings, the old clock

indoors whizzed forth twelve strokes. Soon after, faint sounds floated to her ear from afar over the hills. The breeze came from that quarter, and it had brought with it the notes of distant bells, gaily starting off in a peal: one, two, three, four, five. The ringers at East Egdon were announcing the nuptials of Eustacia and her son.

'Then it is over,' she murmured. 'Well, well! and life too will be over soon. And why should I go on scolding my face like this? Cry about one thing in life, cry about all; one thread runs through the whole piece. And yet we say, "a time to laugh!"'

Towards evening Wildeve came. Since Thomasin's marriage Mrs. Yeobright had shown towards him that grim friendliness which at last arises in all such cases of undesired affinity. The vision of what ought to have been is thrown aside in sheer weariness, and browbeaten human endeavour listlessly makes the best of the fact that is. Wildeve, to do him justice, had behaved very courteously to his wife's aunt; and it was with no surprise that she saw him enter now.

'Thomasin has not been able to come, as she promised to do,' he replied to her inquiry, which had been anxious, for she knew that her niece was badly in want of money. 'The captain came down last night and personally pressed her to join them to-day. So, not to be unpleasant, she determined to go. They fetched her in the pony-chaise, and are going to bring her back.'

'Then it is done,' said Mrs. Yeobright. 'Have they gone to their new home?'

'I don't know. I have had no news from Mistover since Thomasin left to go.'

'You did not go with her?' said she, as if there might be good reasons why.

'I could not,' said Wildeve, reddening slightly. 'We could not both leave the house; it was rather a busy morning, on account of Anglebury Great Market. I believe you have something to give to Thomasin? If you like, I will take it.'

Mrs. Yeobright hesitated, and wondered if Wildeve knew what the something was. 'Did she tell you of this?' she inquired.

'Not particularly. She casually dropped a remark about having arranged to fetch some article or other.'

'It is hardly necessary to send it. She can have it whenever she chooses to come.'

'That won't be yet. In the present state of her health she must not go on walking so much as she has done.' He added, with a faint twang of sarcasm, 'What wonderful thing is it that I cannot be trusted to take?'

'Nothing worth troubling you with.'

'One would think you doubted my honesty,' he said, with a laugh, though his colour rose in a quick resentfulness frequent with him.

'You need think no such thing,' said she drily. 'It is simply that I, in common with the rest of the world, feel that there are certain things which had better be done by certain people than by others.'

'As you like, as you like,' said Wildeve laconically. 'It is not worth arguing about. Well, I think I must turn homeward again, as the inn must not be left long in charge of the lad and the maid only.'

He went his way, his farewell being scarcely so courteous as his greeting. But Mrs. Yeobright knew him thoroughly by this time, and took little choice of his manner, good or bad.

When Wildeve was gone Mrs. Yeobright stood and considered what would be the best course to adopt with regard to the guineas, which she had not liked to entrust to Wildeve. It was hardly credible that Thomasin had told him to ask for them, when the necessity for them had arisen from the difficulty of obtaining money at his hands. At the same time Thomasin really wanted them, and might be unable to come to Blooms-End for another week at least. To take or send the money to her at the inn would be impolitic, since Wildeve would pretty surely be present, or would discover the transaction; and if, as her aunt suspected, he treated her less kindly than she deserved to be treated, he might then get the whole sum out of her gentle hands. But on this particular evening Thomasin was at Mistover, and anything might be conveyed to her there without the knowledge of her husband. Upon the whole the opportunity was worth taking advantage of.

Her son, too, was there, and was now married. There could be no more proper moment to render him his share of the money than the present. And the chance that would be afforded her, by sending him this gift, of showing how far she was from bearing him ill-will, cheered the sad mother's heart.

She went upstairs and took from a locked drawer a little box, out of which she poured a hoard of broad unworn guineas that had lain there many a year. There were a hundred in all, and she divided them into two heaps, fifty in each. Tying up these in small canvas bags, she went down to the garden and called to Christian Cantle, who was loitering about in hope of a supper which was not really owed him. Mrs. Yeobright gave him the money-bags, charged him to go to Mistover, and on no account to deliver them into any one's hands save her son's and Thomasin's. On further thought she deemed it advisable to tell Christian precisely what the two bags contained, that he might be fully impressed with their importance. Christian pocketed the money-bags, promised the great carefulness, and set out on his way.

'You need not hurry,' said Mrs. Yeobright. 'It will be better not to get there till after dusk, and then nobody will notice you. Come back here to supper, if it is not too late.'

It was nearly nine o'clock when he began to ascend the vale towards Mistover; but the long days of summer being at their climax, the first obscurity of evening had only just begun to tan the landscape. At this point of his journey Christian heard voices, and found that they proceeded from a company of men and women who were traversing a hollow ahead of him, the tops only of their heads being visible.

He paused and thought of the money he carried. It was almost too early even for Christian seriously to fear robbery; nevertheless he took a precaution

which ever since his boyhood he had adopted whenever he carried more than two or three shillings upon his person—a precaution somewhat like that of the owner of the Pitt Diamond when filled with similar misgivings. He took off his boots, untied the guineas, and emptied the contents of one little bag into the right boot, and of the other into the left, spreading them as flatly as possible over the bottom of each, which was really a spacious coffer by no means limited to the size of the foot. Pulling them on again and lacing them to the very top, he proceeded on his way, more easy in his head than under his soles.

His path converged towards that of the noisy company, and on coming nearer he found to his relief that they were several Egdon people whom he knew very well, while with them walked Fairway, of Blooms-End.

'What! Christian going too?' said Fairway as soon as he recognized the new-comer. 'You've got no young woman nor wife to your name to gie a gown-piece to, I'm sure.'

'What d'ye mean?' said Christian.

'Why, the raffle. The one we go to every year. Going to the raffle as well as ourselves?'

'Never knew a word o't. Is it like cudgel-playing or other sportful forms of bloodshed? I don't want to go, thank you, Mister Fairway, and no offence.'

'Christian don't know the fun o't, and 'twould be a fine sight for him,' said a buxom woman. 'There's no danger at all, Christian. Every man puts in a shilling apiece, and one wins a gown-piece for his wife or sweetheart if he's got one.'

'Well, as that's not my fortune there's no meaning in it to me. But I should like to see the fun, if there's nothing of the black art in it, and if a man may look on without cost or getting into any dangerous wrangle?'

'There will be no uproar at all,' said Timothy. 'Sure, Christian, if you'd like to come we'll see there's no harm done.'

'And no ba'dy gaeities, I suppose? You see, neighbours, if so, it would be setting father a bad example, as he is so light moral'd. But a gown-piece for a shilling, and no black art—'tis worth looking in to see, and it wouldn't hinder me half an hour. Yes, I'll come, if you'll step a little way towards Mistover with me afterwards, supposing night should have closed in, and nobody else is going that way?'

One or two promised; and Christian, diverging from his direct path, turned round to the right with his companions towards the Quiet Woman.

When they entered the large common room of the inn they found assembled there about ten men from among the neighbouring population, and the group was increased by the new contingent to double that number. Most of them were sitting round the room in seats divided by wooden elbows like those of crude cathedral stalls, which were carved with the initials of many an illustrious drunkard of former times who had passed his days and his nights between them, and now lay as an alcoholic cinder in the nearest church-

yard. Among the cups on the long table before the sitters lay an open parcel of light drapery—the gown-piece, as it was called—which was to be raffled for. Wildevé was standing with his back to the fireplace, smoking a cigar; and the promoter of the raffle, a packman from a distant town, was expatiating upon the value of the fabric as material for a summer dress.

‘Now, gentlemen,’ he continued, as the new-comers drew up to the table, ‘there’s five have entered, and we want four more to make up the number. I think, by the faces of those gentlemen who have just come in, that they are shrewd enough to take advantage of this rare opportunity of beautifying their ladies at a very trifling expense.’

Fairway, Sam, and another placed their shillings on the table, and the man turned to Christian.

‘No, sir,’ said Christian, drawing back, with a quick gaze of misgiving ‘I am only a poor chap come to look on, an it please ye, sir. I don’t so much as know how you do it. If so be I was sure of getting it I would put down the shilling; but I couldn’t otherwise.’

‘I think you might almost be sure,’ said the pedlar. ‘In fact, now I look into your face, even if I can’t say you are sure to win, I can say that I never saw anything look more like winning in my life.’

‘You’ll anyhow have the same chance as the rest of us,’ said Sam.

‘And the extra luck of being the last comer,’ said another.

‘And I was born wi’ a caul, and perhaps can be no more ruined than drowned?’ Christian added, beginning to give way.

Ultimately Christian laid down his shilling, the raffle began, and the dice went round. When it came to Christian’s turn he took the box with a trembling hand, shook it fearfully, and threw a pair-royal. Three of the others had thrown common low pairs, and all the rest mere points.

‘The gentleman looked like winning, as I said,’ observed the chapman, blandly. ‘Take it, sir; the article is yours.’

‘Haw-haw-haw!’ said Fairway. ‘I’m damned if this isn’t the quarest start that ever I knowed!’

‘Mine?’ asked Christian, with a vacant stare from his target eyes. ‘I—I haven’t got neither maid, wife, nor widdier belonging to me at all, and I’m afeard it will make me laughed at to ha’e it, Master Traveller. What with being curious to join in I never thought of that! What shall I do wi’ a woman’s clothes in my bedroom, and not lose my decency!’

‘Keep ’em, to be sure,’ said Fairway, ‘if it is only for luck. Perhaps ’twill tempt some woman that thy poor carcase had no power over when standing empty-handed.’

‘Keep it, certainly,’ said Wildevé, who had idly watched the scene from a distance.

The table was then cleared of the articles, and the men began to drink.

‘Well, to be sure!’ said Christian, half to himself. ‘To think I should have been born so lucky as this, and not have found it out until now! What curious creatures these dice be—powerful rulers of us all, and yet at my com-

mand! I am sure I never need be afraid of anything after this.' He handled the dice fondly one by one. 'Why, sir,' he said in a confidential whisper to Wildevé, who was near his left hand, 'if I could only use this power that's in me of multiplying money I might do some good to a near relation of yours, seeing what I've got about me of hers—eh?' He tapped one of his money-laden boots upon the floor.

'What do you mean?' said Wildevé.

'That's a secret. Well, I must be going now.' He looked anxiously towards Fairway.

'Where are you going?' Wildevé asked.

'To Mistover Knap. I have to see Mrs. Thomasin there—that's all.'

'I am going there, too, to fetch Mrs. Wildevé. We can walk together.'

Wildevé became lost in thought, and a look of inward illumination came into his eyes. It was money for his wife that Mrs. Yeobright could not trust him with. 'Yet she could trust this fellow,' he said to himself. 'Why doesn't that which belongs to the wife belong to the husband too?'

He called to the pot-boy to bring him his hat, and said, 'Now, Christian, I am ready.'

'Mr. Wildevé,' said Christian timidly, as he turned to leave the room, 'would you mind lending me them wonderful little things that carry my luck inside 'em, that I might practise a bit by myself, you know?' He looked wistfully at the dice and box lying on the mantelpiece.

'Certainly,' said Wildevé carelessly. 'They were only cut out by some lad with his knife, and are worth nothing.' And Christian went back and privately pocketed them.

Wildevé opened the door and looked out. The night was warm and cloudy. 'By Gad! 'tis dark,' he continued. 'But I suppose we shall find our way.'

'If we should lose the path it might be awkward,' said Christian. 'A lantern is the only shield that will make it safe for us.'

'Let's have a lantern by all means.' The stable-lantern was fetched and lighted. Christian took up his gown-piece, and the two set out to ascend the hill.

Within the room the men fell into chat till their attention was for a moment drawn to the chimney-corner. This was large, and, in addition to its proper recess, contained within its jambs, like many on Egdon, a receding seat, so that a person might sit there absolutely unobserved, provided there was no fire to light him up, as was the case now and throughout the summer. From the niche a single object protruded into the light from the candles on the table. It was a clay pipe, and its colour was reddish. The men had been attracted to this object by a voice behind the pipe asking for a light.

'Upon my life, it fairly startled me when the man spoke!' said Fairway, handing a candle. 'Oh—'tis the reddleman! You've kept a quiet tongue, young man.'

'Yes, I had nothing to say,' observed Venn. In a few minutes he arose and wished the company good night.

Meanwhile Wildevé and Christian had plunged into the heath.

It was a stagnant, warm, and misty night, full of all the heavy perfumes of new vegetation not yet dried by hot sun, and among these particularly the scent of the fern. The lantern, dangling from Christian's hand, brushed the feathery fronds in passing by, disturbing moths and other winged insects, which flew out and alighted upon its horny panes.

'So you have money to carry to Mrs. Wildevé?' said Christian's companion, after a silence. 'Don't you think it very odd that it shouldn't be given to me?'

'As man and wife be one flesh, 'twould have been all the same, I should think,' said Christian. 'But my strict documents was, to give the money into Mrs. Wildevé's hand: and 'tis well to do things right.'

'No doubt,' said Wildevé. Any person who had known the circumstances might have perceived that Wildevé was mortified by the discovery that the matter in transit was money, and not, as he had supposed when at Blooms-End, some fancy nicknack which only interested the two women themselves. Mrs. Yeobright's refusal implied that his honour was not considered to be of sufficiently good quality to make him a safe bearer of his wife's property.

'How very warm it is to-night, Christian!' he said, panting, when they were nearly under Rainbarrow. 'Let us sit down for a few minutes, for Heaven's sake.'

Wildevé flung himself down on the soft ferns; and Christian, placing the lantern and parcel on the ground, perched himself in a cramped position hard by, his knees almost touching his chin. He presently thrust one hand into his coat-pocket and began shaking it about.

'What are you rattling in there?' said Wildevé.

'Only the dice, sir,' said Christian, quickly withdrawing his hand. 'What magical machines these little things be, Mr. Wildevé! 'Tis a game I should never get tired of. Would you mind my taking 'em out and looking at 'em for a minute, to see how they are made? I didn't like to look close before the other men, for fear they should think it bad manners in me.' Christian took them out and examined them in the hollow of his hand by the lantern light. 'That these little things should carry such luck, and such charm, and such a spell, and such power in 'em, passes all I ever heard or zeed,' he went on, with a fascinated gaze at the dice, which, as is frequently the case in country places, were made of wood, the points being burnt upon each face with the end of a wire.

'They are a great deal in a small compass, you think?'

'Yes. Do ye suppose they really be the devil's playthings, Mr. Wildevé? If so, 'tis no good sign that I be such a lucky man.'

'You ought to win some money, now that you've got them. Any woman would marry you then. Now is your time, Christian, and I would recom-

mend you not to let it slip. Some men are born to luck, some are not. I belong to the latter class.'

'Did you ever know anybody who was born to it besides myself?'

'O yes. I once heard of an Italian, who sat down at a gaming-table, with only a louis (that's a foreign sovereign) in his pocket. He played on for twenty-four hours, and won ten thousand pounds, stripping the bank he had played against. Then there was another man who had lost a thousand pounds, and went to the broker's next day to sell stock, that he might pay the debt. The man to whom he owed the money went with him in a hackney-coach; and to pass the time they tossed who should pay the fare. The ruined man won, and the other was tempted to continue the game, and they played all the way. When the coachman stopped he was told to drive home again: the whole thousand pounds had been won back by the man who was going to sell.'

'Ha—ha—splendid!' exclaimed Christian. 'Go on—go on!'

'Then there was a man of London, who was only a waiter at White's club-house. He began playing first half-crown stakes, and then higher and higher, till he became very rich, got an appointment in India, and rose to be Governor of Madras. His daughter married a member of parliament, and the Bishop of Carlisle stood godfather to one of the children.'

'Wonderful! wonderful!'

'And once there was a young man in America who gambled till he had lost his last dollar. He staked his watch and chain; and lost as before: staked his umbrella; lost again: staked his hat; lost again: staked his coat and stood in his shirt-sleeves; lost again. Began taking off his breeches, and then a looker-on gave him a trifle for his pluck. With this he won. Won back his coat, won back his hat, won back his umbrella, his watch, his money, and went out of the door a rich man.'

'O, 'tis too good—it takes away my breath! Mr. Wildevé, I think I will try another shilling with you, as I am one of that sort; no danger can come o't, and you can afford to lose.'

'Very well,' said Wildevé, rising. Searching about with the lantern, he found a large flat stone, which he placed between himself and Christian, and sat down again. The lantern was opened to give more light, and its rays directed upon the stone. Christian put down a shilling, Wildevé another, and each threw. Christian won. They played for two. Christian won again.

'Let us try four,' said Wildevé. They played for four. This time the stakes were won by Wildevé.

'Ah, those little accidents will, of course, sometimes happen to the luckiest man,' he observed.

'And now I have no more money!' exclaimed Christian excitedly. 'And yet, if I could go on, I should get it back again, and more. I wish this was mine.' He struck his boot upon the ground, so that the guineas chinked within.

'What! you have not put Mrs. Wildevé's money there?'

'Yes. 'Tis for safety. Is it any harm to raffle with a married lady's money when, if I win, I shall only keep my winnings, and give her her own all the same; and if t'other man wins, her money will go to the lawful owner?'

'None at all.'

Wildeve had been brooding ever since they started on the mean estimation in which he was held by his wife's friend; and it cut his heart severely. As the minutes passed he had gradually drifted into a revengeful intention without knowing the precise moment of forming it. This was to teach Mrs Yeobright a lesson, as he considered it to be; in other words, to show her, if he could, that her niece's husband was the proper guardian of her niece's money.

'Well, here goes!' said Christian, beginning to unlace one boot. 'I shall dream of it nights and nights, I suppose; but I shall always swear my flesh don't crawl when I think o't!'

He thrust his hand into the boot and withdrew one of poor Thomasin's precious guineas, piping hot. Wildeve had already placed a sovereign on the stone. The game was then resumed. Wildeve won first, and Christian ventured another, winning himself this time. The game fluctuated, but the average was in Wildeve's favour. Both men became so absorbed in the game that they took no heed of anything but the pigmy objects immediately beneath their eyes; the flat stone, the open lantern, the dice, and the few illuminated fern-leaves which lay under the light, were the whole world to them.

At length Christian lost rapidly; and presently, to his horror, the whole fifty guineas belonging to Thomasin had been handed over to his adversary.

'I don't care—I don't care!' he moaned, and desperately set about untying his left boot to get at the other fifty. 'The devil will toss me into the flames on his three-pronged fork for this night's work, I know! But perhaps I shall win yet, and then I'll get a wife to sit up with me o' nights, and I won't be afeard, I won't! Here's another for'ee, my man!' He slapped another guinea down upon the stone, and the dice-box was rattled again.

Time passed on. Wildeve began to be as excited as Christian himself. When commencing the game his intention had been nothing further than a bitter practical joke on Mrs. Yeobright. To win the money, fairly or otherwise, and to hand it contemptuously to Thomasin in her aunt's presence, had been the dim outline of his purpose. But men are drawn from their intentions even in the course of carrying them out, and it was extremely doubtful, by the time the twentieth guinea had been reached, whether Wildeve was conscious of any other intention than that of winning for his own personal benefit. Moreover, he was now no longer gambling for his wife's money, but for Yeobright's; though of this fact Christian, in his apprehensiveness, did not inform him till afterwards.

It was nearly eleven o'clock, when, with almost a shriek, Christian placed Yeobright's last bright guinea upon the stone. In thirty seconds it had gone the way of its companions.

Christian turned and flung himself on the ferns in a convulsion of re-

morse. 'O, what shall I do with my wretched self?' he groaned. 'What shall I do? Will any good Heaven have mercy upon my wicked soul?'

'Do? Live on just the same.'

'I won't live on just the same! I'll die! I say you are a—a——'

'A man sharper than my neighbour.'

'Yes, a man sharper than my neighbour; a regular sharper!'

'Poor chips-in-porridge, you are very unmannerly.'

'I don't know about that! And I say you be unmannerly! You've got money that isn't your own. Half the guineas are poor Mr. Clym's.'

'How's that?'

'Because I had to give fifty of 'em to him. Mrs. Yeobright said so.'

'Oh? . . . Well, 'twould have been more graceful of her to have given them to his wife Eustacia. But they are in my hands now.'

Christian pulled on his boots, and with heavy breathings, which could be heard to some distance, dragged his limbs together, arose, and tottered away out of sight. Wildeve set about shutting the lantern to return to the house, for he deemed it too late to go to Mistover to meet his wife, who was to be driven home in the captain's four-wheel. While he was closing the little horn door a figure rose from behind a neighbouring bush and came forward into the lantern light. It was the reddleman approaching.

VIII. A NEW FORCE DISTURBS THE CURRENT

WILDEVE stared. Venn looked coolly towards Wildeve, and, without a word being spoken, he deliberately sat himself down where Christian had been seated, thrust his hand into his pocket, drew out a sovereign, and laid it on the stone.

'You have been watching us from behind that bush?' said Wildeve.

The reddleman nodded. 'Down with your stake,' he said. 'Or haven't you pluck enough to go on?'

Now, gambling is a species of amusement which is much more easily begun with full pockets than left off with the same; and though Wildeve in a cooler temper might have prudently declined this invitation, the excitement of his recent success carried him completely away. He placed one of the guineas on the slab beside the reddleman's sovereign. 'Mine is a guinea,' he said.

'A guinea that's not your own,' said Venn sarcastically.

'It is my own,' answered Wildeve haughtily. 'It is my wife's, and what is hers is mine.'

'Very well; let's make a beginning.' He shook the box, and threw eight, ten, and nine; the three casts amounted to twenty-seven.

This encouraged Wildeve. He took the box; and his three casts amounted to forty-five.

Down went another of the reddleman's sovereigns against his first one which Wildevé laid. This time Wildevé threw fifty-one points, but no pair. The reddleman looked grim, threw a raffle of aces, and pocketed the stakes. 'Here you are again,' said Wildevé contemptuously. 'Double the stakes.' He laid two of Thomasin's guineas, and the reddleman his two pounds. Venn won again. New stakes were laid on the stone, and the gamblers proceeded as before.

Wildevé was a nervous and excitable man; and the game was beginning to tell upon his temper. He writhed, fumed, shifted his seat; and the beating of his heart was almost audible. Venn sat with lips impassively closed and eyes reduced to a pair of unimportant twinkles; he scarcely appeared to breathe. He might have been an Arab, or an automaton; he would have been like a red-sandstone statue but for the motion of his arm with the dice-box.

The game fluctuated now in favour of one, now in favour of the other, without any great advantage on the side of either. Nearly twenty minutes were passed thus. The light of the candle had by this time attracted heath-flies, moths, and other winged creatures of night, which floated round the lantern, flew into the flame, or beat about the faces of the two players.

But neither of the men paid much attention to these things, their eyes being concentrated upon the little flat stone, which to them was an arena vast and important as a battle-field. By this time a change had come over the game; the reddleman won continually. At length sixty guineas—Thomasin's fifty and ten of Clym's—had passed into his hands. Wildevé was reckless, frantic, exasperated.

'“Won back his coat,”' said Venn slyly.

Another throw, and the money went the same way.

'“Won back his hat,”' continued Venn.

'Oh, oh!' said Wildevé.

'“Won back his watch, won back his money, and went out of the door a rich man,”' added Venn sentence by sentence, as stake after stake passed over to him.

'Five more!' shouted Wildevé, dashing down the money. 'And three casts be hanged—one shall decide.'

The red automaton opposite lapsed into silence, nodded, and followed his example. Wildevé rattled the box, and threw a pair of sixes and five points. He clapped his hands; 'I have done it this time—hurrah!'

'There are two playing, and only one has thrown,' said the reddleman, quietly bringing down the box. The eyes of each were then so intently converged upon the stone that one could fancy their beams were visible, like rays in a fog.

Venn lifted the box, and behold a triplet of sixes was disclosed.

Wildevé was full of fury. While the reddleman was grasping the stakes Wildevé seized the dice and hurled them, box and all, into the darkness, uttering a fearful imprecation. Then he arose and began stamping up and down like a madman.

'It is all over, then?' said Venn.

'No, no!' cried Wildeve. 'I mean to have another chance yet. I must!'

'But, my good man, what have you done with the dice?'

'I threw them away—it was a momentary irritation. What a fool I am! Here—come and help me to look for them—we must find them again.'

Wildeve snatched up the lantern and began anxiously prowling among the furze and fern.

'You are not likely to find them there,' said Venn, following. 'What did you do such a crazy thing as that for? Here's the box. The dice can't be far off.'

Wildeve turned the light eagerly upon the spot where Venn had found the box, and mauled the herbage right and left. In the course of a few minutes one of the dice was found. They searched on for some time, but no other was to be seen.

'Never mind,' said Wildeve; 'let's play with one.'

'Agreed,' said Venn.

Down they sat again, and recommenced with single guinea stakes; and the play went on smartly. But Fortune had unmistakably fallen in love with the reddleman to-night. He won steadily, till he was the owner of fourteen more of the gold pieces. Seventy-nine of the hundred guineas were his, Wildeve possessing only twenty-one. The aspect of the two opponents was now singular. Apart from motions, a complete diorama of the fluctuations of the game went on in their eyes. A diminutive candle-flame was mirrored in each pupil, and it would have been possible to distinguish therein between the moods of hope and the moods of abandonment, even as regards the reddleman, though his facial muscles betrayed nothing at all. Wildeve played on with the recklessness of despair.

'What's that?' he suddenly exclaimed, hearing a rustle; and they both looked up.

They were surrounded by dusky forms about four feet high, standing a few paces beyond the rays of the lantern. A moment's inspection revealed that the encircling figures were heath-croppers, their heads being all towards the players, at whom they gazed intently.

'Hoosh!' said Wildeve; and the whole forty or fifty animals at once turned and galloped away. Play was again resumed.

Ten minutes passed away. Then a large death's-head moth advanced from the obscure outer air, wheeled twice round the lantern, flew straight at the candle, and extinguished it by the force of the blow. Wildeve had just thrown, but had not lifted the box to see what he had cast; and now it was impossible.

'What the infernal!' he shrieked. 'Now, what shall we do? Perhaps I have thrown six—have you any matches?'

'None,' said Venn.

'Christian had some—I wonder where he is. Christian!'

But there was no reply to Wildeve's shout, save a mournful whining from

the herons which were nesting lower down the vale. Both men looked blankly round without rising. As their eyes grew accustomed to the darkness they perceived faint greenish points of light among the grass and fern. These lights dotted the hillside like stars of a low magnitude.

'Ah—glowworms,' said Wildeve. 'Wait a minute. We can continue the game.'

Venn sat still, and his companion went hither and thither till he had gathered thirteen glowworms—as many as he could find in a space of four or five minutes—upon a foxglove leaf which he pulled for the purpose. The reddleman vented a low humorous laugh when he saw his adversary return with these. 'Determined to go on, then?' he said drily.

'I always am!' said Wildeve angrily. And shaking the glowworms from the leaf he ranged them with a trembling hand in a circle on the stone, leaving a space in the middle for the descent of the dice-box, over which the thirteen tiny lamps threw a pale phosphoric shine. The game was again renewed. It happened to be that season of the year at which glowworms put forth their greatest brilliancy, and the light they yielded was more than ample for the purpose, since it is possible on such nights to read the handwriting of a letter by the light of two or three.

The incongruity between the men's deeds and their environment was great. Amid the soft juicy vegetation of the hollow in which they sat, the motionless and the uninhabited solitude, intruded the chink of guineas, the rattle of dice, the exclamations of the reckless players.

Wildeve had lifted the box as soon as the lights were obtained, and the solitary die proclaimed that the game was still against him.

'I won't play any more: you've been tampering with the dice,' he shouted.

'How—when they were your own?' said the reddleman.

'We'll change the game: the lowest point shall win the stake—it may cut off my ill luck. Do you refuse?'

'No—go on,' said Venn.

'O, there they are again—damn them!' cried Wildeve, looking up. The heath-croppers had returned noiselessly, and were looking on with erect heads just as before, their timid eyes fixed upon the scene, as if they were wondering what mankind and candle-light could have to do in these haunts at this untoward hour.

'What a plague those creatures are—staring so!' he said, and flung a stone, which scattered them; when the game was continued as before.

Wildeve had now ten guineas left; and each laid five. Wildeve threw three points; Venn two, and raked in the coins. The other seized the die, and clenched his teeth upon it in sheer rage, as if he would bite it in pieces. 'Never give in—here are my last five!' he cried, throwing them down. 'Hang the glowworms—they are going out. Why don't you burn, you little fools? Stir them up with a thorn.'

He probed the glowworms with a bit of stick, and rolled them over, till the bright side of their tails was upwards.

'There's light enough. Throw on,' said Venn.

Wildeve brought down the box within the shining circle and looked eagerly. He had thrown ace. 'Well done!—I said it would turn, and it has turned.' Venn said nothing; but his hand shook slightly.

He threw ace also.

'O!' said Wildeve. 'Curse me!'

The die smacked the stone a second time. It was ace again. Venn looked gloomy, threw: the die was seen to be lying in two pieces, the cleft sides uppermost.

'I've thrown nothing at all,' he said.

'Serves me right—I split the die with my teeth. Here—take your money. Blank is less than one.'

'I don't wish it.'

'Take it, I say—you've won it!' And Wildeve threw the stakes against the reddleman's chest. Venn gathered them up, arose, and withdrew from the hollow, Wildeve sitting stupefied.

When he had come to himself he also arose, and, with the extinguished lantern in his hand, went towards the high-road. On reaching it he stood still. The silence of night pervaded the whole heath except in one direction; and that was towards Mistover. There he could hear the noise of light wheels, and presently saw two carriage-lamps descending the hill. Wildeve screened himself under a bush and waited.

The vehicle came on and passed before him. It was a hired carriage, and behind the coachman were two persons whom he knew well. There sat Eustacia and Yeobright, the arm of the latter being round her waist. They turned the sharp corner at the bottom towards the temporary home which Clym had hired and furnished, about three miles to the eastward.

Wildeve forgot the loss of the money at the sight of his lost love, whose preciousness in his eyes was increasing in geometrical progression with each new incident that reminded him of their hopeless division. Brimming with the subtilized misery that he was capable of feeling, he followed the opposite way towards the inn.

About the same moment that Wildeve stepped into the highway Venn also had reached it at a point a hundred yards further on; and he, hearing the same wheels, likewise waited till the carriage should come up. When he saw who sat therein he seemed to be disappointed. Reflecting a minute or two, during which interval the carriage rolled on, he crossed the road, and took a short cut through the furze and heath to a point where the turnpike-road bent round in ascending a hill. He was now again in front of the carriage, which presently came up at a walking pace. Venn stepped forward and showed himself.

Eustacia started when the lamp shone upon him, and Clym's arm was involuntarily withdrawn from her waist. He said, 'What, Diggory? You are having a lonely walk.'

'Yes—I beg your pardon for stopping you,' said Venn. 'But I am waiting

about for Mrs. Wildeve: I have something to give her from Mrs. Yeobright. Can you tell me if she's gone home from the party yet?'

'No. But she will be leaving soon. You may possibly meet her at the corner.'

Venn made a farewell obeisance; and walked back to his former position, where the by-road from Mistover joined the highway. Here he remained fixed for nearly half an hour; and then another pair of lights came down the hill. It was the old-fashioned wheeled nondescript belonging to the captain, and Thomasin sat in it alone, driven by Charley.

The reddleman came up as they slowly turned the corner. 'I beg pardon for stopping you, Mrs. Wildeve,' he said. 'But I have something to give you privately from Mrs. Yeobright.' He handed a small parcel; it consisted of the hundred guineas he had just won, roughly twisted up in a piece of paper.

Thomasin recovered from her surprise, and took the packet. 'That's all, ma'am—I wish you good-night,' he said, and vanished from her view.

Thus Venn, in his anxiety to rectify matters, had placed in Thomasin's hands not only the fifty guineas which rightly belonged to her, but also the fifty intended for her cousin Clym. His mistake had been based upon Wildeve's words at the opening of the game, when he indignantly denied that the guinea was not his own. It had not been comprehended by the reddleman that at half-way through the performance the game was continued with the money of another person; and it was an error which afterwards helped to cause more misfortune than treble the loss in money value could have done.

The night was now somewhat advanced; and Venn plunged deeper into the heath, till he came to a ravine where his van was standing—a spot not more than two hundred yards from the site of the gambling bout. He entered this movable home of his, lit his lantern, and, before closing his door for the night, stood reflecting on the circumstances of the preceding hours. While he stood the dawn grew visible in the northeast quarter of the heavens, which, the clouds having cleared off, was bright with a soft sheen at this mid-summer time, though it was only between one and two o'clock. Venn, thoroughly weary, then shut his door and flung himself down to sleep.

BOOK IV: THE CLOSED DOOR

I. THE RENCONTRE BY THE POOL

THE July sun shone over Egdon and fired its crimson heather to scarlet. It was the one season of the year, and the one weather of the season, in which the heath was gorgeous. This flowering period represented the second or noontide division in the cycle of those superficial changes which alone were possible here; it followed the green or young-fern period, representing the morn, and preceded the brown period, when the heath-bells and ferns would wear the russet tinges of evening; to be in turn displaced by the dark hue of the winter period, representing night.

Clym and Eustacia, in their little house at Alderworth, were living on with a monotony which was delightful to them. The heath and changes of weather were quite blotted out from their eyes for the present. They were enclosed in a sort of luminous mist, which hid from them surroundings of any inharmonious colour, and gave to all things the character of light. When it rained they were charmed, because they could remain indoors together all day with such a show of reason; when it was fine they were charmed, because they could sit together on the hills. They were like those double stars which revolve round and round each other, and from a distance appear to be one. The absolute solitude in which they lived intensified their reciprocal thoughts; yet some might have said that it had the disadvantage of consuming their mutual affections at a fearfully prodigal rate. Yeobright did not fear for his own part; but recollection of Eustacia's old speech about the evanescence of love, now apparently forgotten by her, sometimes caused him to ask himself a question; and he recoiled at the thought that the quality of finiteness was not foreign to Eden.

When three or four weeks had been passed thus, Yeobright resumed his reading in earnest. To make up for lost time he studied indefatigably, for he wished to enter his new profession with the least possible delay.

Now, Eustacia's dream had always been that, once married to Clym, she would have the power of inducing him to return to Paris. He had carefully withheld all promise to do so; but would he be proof against her coaxing and argument? She had calculated to such a degree on the probability of success that she had represented Paris, and not Budmouth, to her grandfather as in all likelihood their future home. Her hopes were bound up in this dream. In the quiet days since their marriage, when Yeobright had been poring over her lips, her eyes, and the lines of her face, she had mused and mused on the subject, even while in the act of returning his gaze; and now the sight of the books, indicating a future which was antagonistic to her dream, struck her

with a positively painful jar. She was hoping for the time when, as the mistress of some pretty establishment, however small, near a Parisian Boulevard, she would be passing her days on the skirts at least of the gay world, and catching stray wafts from those town pleasures she was so well fitted to enjoy. Yet Yeobright was as firm in the contrary intention as if the tendency of marriage were rather to develop the fantasies of young philanthropy than to sweep them away.

Her anxiety reached a high pitch; but there was something in Clym's undeviating manner which made her hesitate before sounding him on the subject. At this point in their experience, however, an incident helped her. It occurred one evening about six weeks after their union, and arose entirely out of the unconscious misapplication by Venn of the fifty guineas intended for Yeobright.

A day or two after the receipt of the money Thomasin had sent a note to her aunt to thank her. She had been surprised at the largeness of the amount; but as no sum had ever been mentioned she set that down to her late uncle's generosity. She had been strictly charged by her aunt to say nothing to her husband of this gift; and Wildeve, as was natural enough, had not brought himself to mention to his wife a single particular of the midnight scene in the heath. Christian's terror, in like manner, had tied his tongue on the share he took in that proceeding; and hoping that by some means or other the money had gone to its proper destination, he simply asserted as much, without giving details.

Therefore, when a week or two had passed away, Mrs. Yeobright began to wonder why she never heard from her son of the receipt of the present; and to add gloom to her perplexity came the possibility that resentment might be the cause of his silence. She could hardly believe as much, but why did he not write? She questioned Christian, and the confusion in his answers would at once have led her to believe that something was wrong, had not one-half of his story been corroborated by Thomasin's note.

Mrs. Yeobright was in this state of uncertainty when she was informed one morning that her son's wife was visiting her grandfather at Mistover. She determined to walk up the hill, see Eustacia, and ascertain from her daughter-in-law's lips whether the family guineas, which were to Mrs. Yeobright what family jewels are to wealthier dowagers, had miscarried or not.

When Christian learnt where she was going his concern reached its height. At the moment of her departure he could prevaricate no longer, and, confessing to the gambling, told her the truth as far as he knew it—that the guineas had been won by Wildeve.

'What, is he going to keep them?' Mrs. Yeobright cried.

'I hope and trust not!' moaned Christian. 'He's a good man, and perhaps will do right things. He said you ought to have gied Mr. Clym's share to Eustacia, and that's perhaps what he'll do himself.'

To Mrs. Yeobright, as soon as she could calmly reflect, there was much likelihood in this, for she could hardly believe that Wildeve would really

appropriate money belonging to her son. The intermediate course of giving it to Eustacia was the sort of thing to please Wildeve's fancy. But it filled the mother with anger none the less. That Wildeve should have got command of the guineas after all, and should rearrange the disposal of them, placing Clym's share in Clym's wife's hands, because she had been his own sweet-heart, and might be so still, was as irritating a pain as any that Mrs. Yeobright had ever borne.

She instantly dismissed the wretched Christian from her employ for his conduct in the affair; but, feeling quite helpless and unable to do without him, told him afterwards that he might stay a little longer if he chose. Then she hastened off to Eustacia, moved by a much less promising emotion towards her daughter-in-law than she had felt half an hour earlier, when planning her journey. At that time it was to inquire in a friendly spirit if there had been any accidental loss; now it was to ask plainly if Wildeve had privately given her money which had been intended as a sacred gift to Clym.

She started at two o'clock, and her meeting with Eustacia was hastened by the appearance of the young lady beside the pool and bank which bordered her grandfather's premises, where she stood surveying the scene, and perhaps thinking of the romantic enactments it had witnessed in past days. When Mrs. Yeobright approached, Eustacia surveyed her with the calm stare of a stranger.

The mother-in-law was the first to speak. 'I was coming to see you,' she said.

'Indeed!' said Eustacia with surprise, for Mrs. Yeobright, much to the girl's mortification, had refused to be present at the wedding. 'I did not at all expect you.'

'I was coming on business only,' said the visitor, more coldly than at first. 'Will you excuse my asking this—Have you received a gift from Thomasin's husband?'

'A gift?'

'I mean money!'

'What—I myself?'

'Well, I meant yourself, privately—though I was not going to put it in that way.'

'Money from Mr. Wildeve? No—never! Madam, what do you mean by that?' Eustacia fired up all too quickly, for her own consciousness of the old attachment between herself and Wildeve led her to jump to the conclusion that Mrs. Yeobright also knew of it, and might have come to accuse her of receiving dishonourable presents from him now.

'I simply ask the question,' said Mrs. Yeobright. 'I have been——'

'You ought to have better opinions of me—I feared you were against me from the first' exclaimed Eustacia.

'No. I was simply for Clym,' replied Mrs. Yeobright, with too much emphasis in her earnestness. 'It is the instinct of every one to look after their own.'

'How can you imply that he required guarding against me?' cried Eustacia, passionate tears in her eyes. 'I have not injured him by marrying him! What sin have I done that you should think so ill of me? You had no right to speak against me to him when I have never wronged you.'

'I only did what was fair under the circumstances,' said Mrs. Yeobright more softly. 'I would rather not have gone into this question at present, but you compel me. I am not ashamed to tell you the honest truth. I was firmly convinced that he ought not to marry you—therefore I tried to dissuade him by all the means in my power. But it is done now, and I have no idea of complaining any more. I am ready to welcome you.'

'Ah, yes, it is very well to see things in that business point of view,' murmured Eustacia with a smothered fire of feeling. 'But why should you think there is anything between me and Mr. Wildeve? I have a spirit as well as you. I am indignant; and so would any woman be. It was a condescension in me to be Clym's wife, and not a manoeuvre, let me remind you; and therefore I will not be treated as a schemer whom it becomes necessary to bear with because she has crept into the family.'

'Oh!' said Mrs. Yeobright, vainly endeavouring to control her anger. 'I have never heard anything to show that my son's lineage is not as good as the Vyes'—perhaps better. It is amusing to hear you talk of condescension.'

'It was condescension, nevertheless,' said Eustacia, vehemently. 'And if I had known then what I know now, that I should be living in this wild heath a month after my marriage I—should have thought twice before agreeing.'

'It would be better not to say that; it might not sound truthful. I am not aware that any deception was used on his part—I know there was not—whatever might have been the case on the other side.'

'This is too exasperating!' answered the younger woman huskily, her face crimsoning, and her eyes darting light. 'How can you dare to speak to me like that? I insist upon repeating to you that had I known that my life would from my marriage up to this time have been as it is, I should have said *No*. I don't complain. I have never uttered a sound of such a thing to him; but it is true. I hope therefore that in the future you will be silent on my eagerness. If you injure me now you injure yourself.'

'Injure you? Do you think I am an evil-disposed person?'

'You injured me before my marriage, and you have now suspected me of secretly favouring another man for money!'

'I could not help what I thought. But I have never spoken of you outside my house.'

'You spoke of me within it, to Clym, and you could not do worse.'

'I did my duty.'

'And I'll do mine.'

'A part of which will possibly be to set him against his mother. It is always so. But why should I not bear it as others have borne it before me?'

'I understand you,' said Eustacia, breathless with emotion. 'You think me

capable of every bad thing. Who can be worse than a wife who encourages a lover, and poisons her husband's mind against his relative? Yet that is now the character given to me. Will you not come and drag him out of my hands?'

Mrs. Yeobright gave back heat for heat.

'Don't rage at me, madam! It ill becomes your beauty, and I am not worth the injury you may do it on my account, I assure you. I am only a poor old woman who has lost a son.'

'If you had treated me honourably you would have had him still,' Eustacia said, while scalding tears trickled from her eyes. 'You have brought yourself to folly; you have caused a division which can never be healed!'

'I have done nothing. This audacity from a young woman is more than I can bear.'

'It was asked for: you have suspected me, and you have made me speak of my husband in a way I would not have done. You will let him know that I have spoken thus, and it will cause misery between us. Will you go away from me? You are no friend!'

'I will go when I have spoken a word. If any one says I have come here to question you without good grounds for it, that person speaks untruly. If any one says that I attempted to stop your marriage by any but honest means, that person, too, does not speak the truth. I have fallen on an evil time; God has been unjust to me in letting you insult me! Probably my son's happiness does not lie on this side of the grave, for he is a foolish man who neglects the advice of his parent. You, Eustacia, stand on the edge of the precipice without knowing it. Only show my son one-half the temper you have shown me to-day—and you may before long—and you will find that though he is as gentle as a child with you now, he can be as hard as steel!'

The excited mother then withdrew, and Eustacia, panting, stood looking into the pool.

II. HE IS SET UPON BY ADVERSITIES BUT HE SINGS A SONG

THE result of that unpropitious interview was that Eustacia, instead of passing the afternoon with her grandfather, hastily returned home to Clym, where she arrived three hours earlier than she had been expected.

She came indoors with her face flushed, and her eyes still showing traces of her recent excitement. Yeobright looked up astonished; he had never seen her in any way approaching to that state before. She passed him by, and would have gone upstairs unnoticed, but Clym was so concerned that he immediately followed her.

'What is the matter, Eustacia?' he said. She was standing on the hearthrug in the bedroom, looking upon the floor, her hands clasped in front of her,

her bonnet yet unremoved. For a moment she did not answer; and then she replied in a low voice—

‘I have seen your mother; and I will never see her again!’

A weight fell like a stone upon Clym. That same morning, when Eustacia had arranged to go and see her grandfather, Clym had expressed a wish that she would drive down to Blooms-End and inquire for her mother-in-law, or adopt any other means she might think fit to bring about a reconciliation. She had set out gaily; and he had hoped for much.

‘Why is this?’ he asked.

‘I cannot tell—I cannot remember. I met your mother. And I will never meet her again.’

‘Why?’

‘What do I know about Mr. Wildeve now? I won’t have wicked opinions passed on me by anybody. Oh! it was too humiliating to be asked if I had received any money from him, or encouraged him, or something of the sort—I don’t exactly know what!’

‘How could she have asked you that?’

‘She did.’

‘Then there must have been some meaning in it. What did my mother say besides?’

‘I don’t know what she said, except in so far as this, that we both said words which can never be forgiven!’

‘O, there must be some misapprehension. Whose fault was it that her meaning was not made clear?’

‘I would rather not say. It may have been the fault of the circumstances, which were awkward at the very least. O Clym—I cannot help expressing it—this is an unpleasant position that you have placed me in. But you must improve it—yes, say you will—for I hate it all now! Yes, take me to Paris, and go on with your old occupation, Clym! I don’t mind how humbly we live there at first, if it can only be Paris, and not Egdon Heath.’

‘But I have quite given up that idea,’ said Yeobright, with surprise. ‘Surely I never led you to expect such a thing?’

‘I own it. Yet there are thoughts which cannot be kept out of mind, and that one was mine. Must I not have a voice in the matter, now I am your wife and the sharer of your doom?’

‘Well, there are things which are placed beyond the pale of discussion; and I thought this was specially so, and by mutual agreement.’

‘Clym, I am unhappy at what I hear,’ she said in a low voice; and her eyes drooped, and she turned away.

This indication of an unexpected mine of hope in Eustacia’s bosom disconcerted her husband. It was the first time that he had confronted the fact of the indirectness of a woman’s movement towards her desire. But his intention was unshaken, though he loved Eustacia well. All the effect that her remark had upon him was a resolve to chide himself more closely than ever

to his books, so as to be the sooner enabled to appeal to substantial results from another course in arguing against her whim.

Next day the mystery of the guineas was explained. Thomasin paid them a hurried visit, and Clym's share was delivered up to him by her own hands. Eustacia was not present at the time.

'Then this is what my mother meant,' exclaimed Clym. 'Thomasin, do you know that they have had a bitter quarrel?'

There was a little more reticence now than formerly in Thomasin's manner towards her cousin. It is the effect of marriage to engender in several directions some of the reserve it annihilates in one. 'Your mother told me,' she said quietly. 'She came back to my house.'

'The worst thing I dreaded has come to pass. Was mother much disturbed when she came to you, Thomasin?'

'Yes.'

'Very much indeed?'

'Yes.'

Clym leant his elbow upon the post of the garden gate, and covered his eyes with his hand.

'Don't trouble about it, Clym. They may get to be friends.'

He shook his head. 'Not two people with inflammable natures like theirs. Well, what must be will be.'

'One thing is cheerful in it—the guineas are not lost.'

'I would rather have lost them twice over than have had this happen.'

Amid these jarring events Yeobright felt one thing to be indispensable—that he should speedily make some show of progress in his scholastic plans. With this view he read far into the small hours during many nights.

One morning, after a severer strain than usual, he awoke with a strange sensation in his eyes. The sun was shining directly upon the window-blind, and at his first glance thitherward a sharp pain obliged him to close his eyelids quickly. At every new attempt to look about him the same morbid sensibility to light was manifested, and excoriating tears ran down his cheeks. He was obliged to tie a bandage over his brow while dressing; and during the day it could not be abandoned. Eustacia was thoroughly alarmed. On finding that the case was no better the next morning they decided to send to Anglebury for a surgeon.

Towards evening he arrived, and pronounced the disease to be acute inflammation induced by Clym's night studies, continued in spite of a cold previously caught, which had weakened his eyes for the time.

Fretting with impatience at this interruption to a task he was so anxious to hasten, Clym was transformed into an invalid. He was shut up in a room from which all light was excluded, and his condition would have been one of absolute misery had not Eustacia read to him by the glimmer of a shaded lamp. He hoped that the worst would soon be over; but at the surgeon's third visit he learnt to his dismay that although he might venture out of

doors with shaded eyes in the course of a month, all thought of pursuing his work, or of reading print of any description, would have to be given up for a long time to come.

One week and another week wore on, and nothing seemed to lighten the gloom of the young couple. Dreadful imaginings occurred to Eustacia, but she carefully refrained from uttering them to her husband. Suppose he should become blind, or, at all events, never recover sufficient strength of sight to engage in an occupation which would be congenial to her feelings, and conduce to her removal from this lonely dwelling among the hills? That dream of beautiful Paris was not likely to cohere into substance in the presence of this misfortune. As day after day passed by, and he got no better, her mind ran more and more in this mournful groove, and she would go away from him into the garden and weep despairing tears.

Yeobright thought he would send for his mother; and then he thought he would not. Knowledge of his state could only make her the more unhappy; and the seclusion of their life was such that she would hardly be likely to learn the news except through a special messenger. Endeavouring to take the trouble as philosophically as possible, he waited on till the third week had arrived, when he went into the open air for the first time since the attack. The surgeon visited him again at this stage, and Clym urged him to express a distinct opinion. The young man learnt with added surprise that the date at which he might expect to resume his labours was as uncertain as ever, his eyes being in that peculiar state which, though affording him sight enough for walking about, would not admit of their being strained upon any definite object without incurring the risk of reproducing ophthalmia in its acute form.

Clym was very grave at the intelligence, but not despairing. A quiet firmness, and even cheerfulness, took possession of him. He was not to be blind; that was enough. To be doomed to behold the world through smoked glass for an indefinite period was bad enough, and fatal to any kind of advance; but Yeobright was an absolute stoic in the face of mishaps which only affected his social standing; and, apart from Eustacia, the humblest walk of life would satisfy him if it could be made to work in with some form of his culture scheme. To keep a cottage night-school was one such form; and his affliction did not master his spirit as it might otherwise have done.

He walked through the warm sun westward into those tracts of Egdon with which he was best acquainted, being those lying nearer to his old home. He saw before him in one of the valleys the gleaming of whetted iron, and advancing, dimly perceived that the shine came from the tool of a man who was cutting furze. The worker recognized Clym, and Yeobright learnt from the voice that the speaker was Humphrey.

Humphrey expressed his sorrow at Clym's condition: and added, 'Now, if yours was low-class work like mine, you could go on with it just the same.'

'Yes; I could,' said Yeobright musingly. 'How much do you get for cutting these faggots?'

'Half-a-crown a hundred, and in these long days I can live very well on the wages.'

During the whole of Yeobright's walk home to Alderworth he was lost in reflections which were not of an unpleasant kind. On his coming up to the house Eustacia spoke to him from the open window, and he went across to her.

'Darling,' he said, 'I am much happier. And if my mother were reconciled to me and to you I should, I think, be quite happy.'

'I fear that will never be,' she said, looking afar with her beautiful stormy eyes. 'How *can* you say "I am happier," and nothing changed?'

'It arises from my having at last discovered something I can do, and get a living at, in this time of misfortune.'

'Yes?'

'I am going to be a furze and turf cutter.'

'No, Clym!' she said, the slight hopefulness previously apparent in her face going off again, and leaving her worse than before.

'Surely I shall. Is it not very unwise in us to go on spending the little money we've got when I can keep down expenditure by an honest occupation? The outdoor exercise will do me good, and who knows but that in a few months I shall be able to go on with my reading again?'

'But my grandfather offers to assist us, if we require assistance.'

'We don't require it. If I go furze-cutting we shall be fairly well off.'

'In comparison with slaves, and the Israelites in Egypt, and such people!' A bitter tear rolled down Eustacia's face, which he did not see. There had been *nonchalance* in his tone, showing her that he felt no absolute grief at a consummation which to her was a positive horror.

The very next day Yeobright went to Humphrey's cottage, and borrowed of him leggings, gloves, a whetstone, and a hook, to use till he should be able to purchase some for himself. Then he sailed forth with his new fellow-labourer and old acquaintance, and selecting a spot where the furze grew thickest he struck the first blow in his adopted calling. His sight, like the wings in 'Rasselas,' though useless to him for his grand purpose, sufficed for this strait, and he found that when a little practise should have hardened his palms against blistering he would be able to work with ease.

Day after day he rose with the sun, buckled on his leggings, and went off to the rendezvous with Humphrey. His custom was to work from four o'clock in the morning till noon; then, when the heat of the day was at its highest, to go home and sleep for an hour or two; afterwards coming out again and working till dusk at nine.

This man from Paris was now so disguised by his leather accoutrements, and by the goggles he was obliged to wear over his eyes, that his closest friend might have passed by without recognizing him. He was a brown spot in the midst of an expanse of olive-green gorse, and nothing more. Though frequently depressed in spirit when not actually at work, owing to thoughts

of Eustacia's position and his mother's estrangement, when in the full swing of labour he was cheerfully disposed and calm.

His daily life was of a curious microscopic sort, his whole world being limited to a circuit of a few feet from his person. His familiars were creeping and winged things, and they seemed to enroll him in their band. Bees hummed around his ears with an intimate air, and tugged at the heath and furze-flowers at his side in such numbers as to weigh them down to the sod. The strange amber-coloured butterflies which Egdon produced, and which were never seen elsewhere, quivered in the breath of his lips, alighted upon his bowed back, and sported with the glittering point of his hook as he flourished it up and down. Tribes of emerald-green grasshoppers leaped over his feet, falling awkwardly on their backs, heads, or hips, like unskilful acrobats, as chance might rule; or engaged themselves in noisy flirtations under the fern-fronds with silent ones of homely hue. Huge flies, ignorant of ladders and wire-netting, and quite in a savage state, buzzed about him without knowing that he was a man. In and out of the fern-brakes snakes glided in their most brilliant blue and yellow guise, it being the season immediately following the shedding of their old skins, when their colours are brightest. Litters of young rabbits came out from their forms to sun themselves upon hillocks, the hot beams blazing through the delicate tissue of each thin-fleshed ear, and firing it to a blood-red transparency in which the veins could be seen.

The monotony of his occupation soothed him, and was in itself a pleasure. A forced limitation of effort offered a justification of homely courses to an unambitious man, whose conscience would hardly have allowed him to remain in such obscurity while his powers were unimpeded. Hence Yeobright sometimes sang to himself, and when obliged to accompany Humphrey in search of brambles for faggot-bonds he would amuse his companion with sketches of Parisian life and character, and so while away the time.

On one of these warm afternoons Eustacia walked out alone in the direction of Yeobright's place of work. He was busily chopping away at the furze, a long row of faggots which stretched downward from his position representing the labour of the day. He did not observe her approach, and she stood close to him, and heard his undercurrent of song. It shocked her. To see him there, a poor afflicted man, earning money by the sweat of his brow, had at first moved her to tears; but to hear him sing and not at all rebel against an occupation which, however satisfactory to himself, was degrading to her, as an educated lady-wife, wounded her through. Unconscious of her presence, he still went on singing:—

“Le point du jour
A nos bosquets rend toute leur parure;
Flore est plus belle à son retour;
L'oiseau reprend doux chant d'amour:
Tout célèbre dans la nature
Le point du jour

"Le point du jour
 Cause parfois, cause douleur extrême
 Que l'espace des nuits est court
 Pour le berger brûlant d'amour,
 Forcé de quitter ce qu'il aime
 Au point du jour."

It was bitterly plain to Eustacia that he did not care much about social failure; and the proud fair woman bowed her head and wept in sick despair at thought of the blasting effect upon her own life of that mood and condition in him. Then she came forward.

'I would starve rather than do it!' she exclaimed vehemently. 'And you can sing! I will go and live with my grandfather again!'

'Eustacia! I did not see you, though I noticed something moving,' he said gently. He came forward, pulled off his huge leather glove, and took her hand. 'Why do you speak in such a strange way? It is only a little old song which struck my fancy when I was in Paris, and now just applies to my life with you. Has your love for me all died, then, because my appearance is no longer that of a fine gentleman?'

'Dearest, you must not question me unpleasantly, or it may make me not love you.'

'Do you believe it possible that I would run the risk of doing that?'

'Well, you follow out your own ideas, and won't give in to mine when I wish you to leave off this shameful labour. Is there anything you dislike in me that you act so contrarily to my wishes? I am your wife, and why will you not listen? Yes, I am your wife indeed!'

'I know what that tone means.'

'What tone?'

'The tone in which you said, "Your wife indeed." It meant, "Your wife, worse luck."'

'It is hard in you to probe me with that remark. A woman may have reason, though she is not without heart, and if I felt "worse luck," it was no ignoble feeling—it was only too natural. There, you see that at any rate I do not attempt untruths. Do you remember how, before we were married, I warned you that I had not good wifely qualities?'

'You mock me to say that now. On that point at least the only noble course would be to hold your tongue, for you are still queen of me, Eustacia, though I may no longer be king of you.'

'You are my husband. Does not that content you?'

'Not unless you are my wife without regret.'

'I cannot answer you. I remember saying that I should be a serious matter on your hands.'

'Yes, I saw that.'

'Then you were too quick to see! No true lover would have seen any such thing; you are too severe upon me. Clym—I don't like your speaking so at all.'

'Well, I married you in spite of it, and don't regret doing so. How cold you seem this afternoon! and yet I used to think there never was a warmer heart than yours.'

'Yes, I fear we are cooling—I see it as well as you,' she sighed mournfully. 'And how madly we loved two months ago! You were never tired of contemplating me, nor I of contemplating you. Who could have thought then that by this time my eyes would not seem so very bright to yours, nor your lips so very sweet to mine? Two months—is it possible? Yes, 'tis too true!'

'You sigh, dear, as if you were sorry for it; and that's a hopeful sign.'

'No. I don't sigh for that. There are other things for me to sigh for, or any other woman in my place.'

'That your chances in life are ruined by marrying in haste an unfortunate man?'

'Why will you force me, Clym, to say bitter things? I deserve pity as much as you. As much?—I think I deserve it more. For you can sing! It would be a strange hour which should catch me singing under such a cloud as this! Believe me, sweet, I could weep to a degree that would astonish and confound such an elastic mind as yours. Even had you felt careless about your own affliction, you might have refrained from singing out of sheer pity for mine. God! if I were a man in such a position I would curse rather than sing.'

Yeobright placed his hand upon her arm. 'Now, don't you suppose, my inexperienced girl, that I cannot rebel, in high Promethean fashion, against the gods and fate as well as you. I have felt more steam and smoke of that sort than you have ever heard of. But the more I see of life the more do I perceive that there is nothing particularly great in its greatest walks, and therefore nothing particularly small in mine of furze-cutting. If I feel that the greatest blessings vouchsafed to us are not very valuable, how can I feel it to be any great hardship when they are taken away? So I sing to pass the time. Have you indeed lost all tenderness for me, that you begrudge me a few cheerful moments?'

'I have still some tenderness left for you.'

'Your words have no longer their old flavour. And so love dies with good fortune!'

'I cannot listen to this, Clym—it will end bitterly,' she said in a broken voice. 'I will go home.'

III. SHE GOES OUT TO BATTLE AGAINST DEPRESSION

A FEW days later, before the month of August had expired, Eustacia and Yeobright sat together at their early dinner.

Eustacia's manner had become of late almost apathetic. There was a forlorn look about her beautiful eyes which, whether she deserved it or not, would have excited pity in the breast of any one who had known her

during the full flush of her love for Clym. The feelings of husband and wife varied, in some measure, inversely with their positions. Clym, the afflicted man, was cheerful; and he even tried to comfort her, who had never felt a moment of physical suffering in her whole life.

'Come, brighten up, dearest; we shall be all right again. Some day perhaps I shall see as well as ever. And I solemnly promise that I'll leave off cutting furze as soon as I have the power to do anything better. You cannot seriously wish me to stay idling at home all day?'

'But it is so dreadful—a furze-cutter! and you a man who have lived about the world, and speak French, and German, and who are fit for what is so much better than this.'

'I suppose when you first saw me and heard about me I was wrapped in a sort of golden halo to your eyes—a man who knew glorious things, and had mixed in brilliant scenes—in short, an adorable, delightful, distracting hero?'

'Yes,' she said, sobbing.

'And now I am a poor fellow in brown leather.'

'Don't taunt me. But enough of this. I will not be depressed any more. I am going from home this afternoon, unless you greatly object. There is to be a village picnic—a gipsying, they call it—at East Egdon, and I shall go.'

'To dance?'

'Why not? You can sing.'

'Well, well, as you will. Must I come to fetch you?'

'If you return soon enough from your work. But do not inconvenience yourself about it. I know the way home, and the heath has no terror for me.'

'And can you cling to gaiety so eagerly as to walk all the way to a village festival in search of it?'

'Now, you don't like my going alone! Clym, you are not jealous?'

'No. But I would come with you if it could give you any pleasure; though, as things stand, perhaps you have too much of me already. Still, I somehow wish that you did not want to go. Yes, perhaps I am jealous; and who could be jealous with more reason than I, a half-blind man, over such a woman as you?'

'Don't think like it. Let me go, and don't take all my spirits away!'

'I would rather lose all my own, my sweet wife. Go and do whatever you like. Who can forbid your indulgence in any whim? You have all my heart yet, I believe; and because you bear with me, who am in truth a drag upon you, I owe you thanks. Yes, go alone and shine. As for me, I will stick to my doom. At that kind of meeting people would shun me. My hook and gloves are like the St. Lazarus rattle of the leper, warning the world to get out of the way of a sight that would sadden them.' He kissed her, put on his leggings, and went out.

When he was gone she rested her head upon her hands and said to herself, 'Two wasted lives—his and mine. And I am come to this! Will it drive me out of my mind?'

She cast about for any possible course which offered the least improvement on the existing state of things, and could find none. She imagined how all those Budmouth ones who should learn what had become of her would say, 'Look at the girl for whom nobody was good enough!' To Eustacia the situation seemed such a mockery of her hopes that death appeared the only door of relief if the satire of Heaven should go much further.

Suddenly she aroused herself and exclaimed, 'But I'll shake it off. Yes, I will shake it off! No one shall know my suffering. I'll be bitterly merry, and ironically gay, and I'll laugh in derision! And I'll begin by going to this dance on the green.'

She ascended to her bedroom and dressed herself with scrupulous care. To an onlooker her beauty would have made her feelings almost seem reasonable. The gloomy corner into which accident as much as indiscretion had brought this woman might have led even a moderate partisan to feel that she had cogent reasons for asking the Supreme Power by what right a being of such exquisite finish had been placed in circumstances calculated to make of her charms a curse rather than a blessing.

It was five in the afternoon when she came out from the house ready for her walk. There was material enough in the picture for twenty new conquests. The rebellious sadness that was rather too apparent when she sat indoors without a bonnet was cloaked and softened by her outdoor attire, which always had a sort of nebulousness about it, devoid of harsh edges anywhere; so that her face looked from its environment as from a cloud, with no noticeable lines of demarcation between flesh and clothes. The heat of the day had scarcely declined as yet, and she went along the sunny hills at leisurely pace, there being ample time for her idle expedition. Tall ferns buried her in their leafage whenever her path lay through them, which now formed miniature forests, though not one stem of them would remain to bud the next year.

The site chosen for the village festivity was one of the lawn-like oases which were occasionally, yet not often, met with on the plateaux of the heath district. The brakes of furze and fern terminated abruptly round the margin, and the grass was unbroken. A green cattle-track skirted the spot, without, however, emerging from the screen of fern, and this path Eustacia followed, in order to reconnoitre the group before joining it. The dusty notes of the East Egdon band had directed her unerringly, and she now beheld the musicians themselves, sitting in a blue waggon with red wheels scrubbed as bright as new, and arched with sticks, to which boughs and flowers were tied. In front of this was the grand central dance of fifteen or twenty couples, flanked by minor dances of inferior individuals whose gyrations were not always in strict keeping with the tune.

The young men wore blue and white rosettes, and with a flush on their faces footed it to the girls, who, with the excitement and the exercise, blushed deeper than the pink of their numerous ribbons. Fair ones with long curls, fair ones with short curls, fair ones with love-locks, fair ones

with braids, flew round and round; and a beholder might well have wondered how such a prepossessing set of young women of like size, age, and disposition, could have been collected together where there were only one or two villages to choose from. In the background was one happy man dancing by himself, with closed eyes, totally oblivious of all the rest. A fire was burning under a pollard thorn a few paces off, over which three kettles hung in a row. Hard by was a table where elderly dames prepared tea, but Eustacia looked among them in vain for the cattle-dealer's wife who had suggested that she should come, and had promised to obtain a courteous welcome for her.

This unexpected absence of the only local resident whom Eustacia knew considerably damaged her scheme for an afternoon of reckless gaiety. Joining in became a matter of difficulty, notwithstanding that, were she to advance, cheerful dames would come forward with cups of tea and make much of her as a stranger of superior grace and knowledge to themselves. Having watched the company through the figures of two dances, she decided to walk a little further, to a cottage where she might get some refreshment, and then return homeward in the shady time of evening.

This she did; and by the time that she retraced her steps towards the scene of the gipsying, which it was necessary to repass on her way to Alderworth, the sun was going down. The air was now so still that she could hear the band afar off, and it seemed to be playing with more spirit, if that were possible, than when she had come away. On reaching the hill the sun had quite disappeared; but this made little difference either to Eustacia or to the revellers, for a round yellow moon was rising behind her, though its rays had not yet outmastered those from the west. The dance was going on just the same, but strangers had arrived and formed a ring around the figure, so that Eustacia could stand among these without a chance of being recognized.

A whole village-full of sensuous emotion, scattered abroad all the year long, surged here in a focus for an hour. The forty hearts of those waving couples were beating as they had not done since, twelve months before, they had come together in similar jollity. For the time Paganism was revived in their hearts, the pride of life was all in all, and they adored none other than themselves.

How many of those impassioned but temporary embraces were destined to become perpetual was possibly the wonder of some of those who indulged in them, as well as of Eustacia who looked on. She began to envy those pirouetters, to hunger for the hope and happiness which the fascination of the dance seemed to engender within them. Desperately fond of dancing herself, one of Eustacia's expectations of Paris had been the opportunity it might afford her of indulgence in this favourite pastime. Unhappily, that expectation was now extinct within her for ever.

Whilst she abstractedly watched them spinning and fluctuating in the increasing moonlight she suddenly heard her name whispered by a voice over

her shoulder. Turning in surprise, she beheld at her elbow one whose presence instantly caused her to flush to the temples.

It was Wildeve. Till this moment he had not met her eye since the morning of his marriage, when she had been loitering in the church, and had startled him by lifting her veil and coming forward to sign the register as witness. Yet why the sight of him should have instigated that sudden rush of blood she could not tell.

Before she could speak he whispered. 'Do you like dancing as much as ever?'

'I think I do,' she replied in a low voice.

'Will you dance with me?'

'It would be a great change for me; but will it not seem strange?'

'What strangeness can there be in relations dancing together?'

'Ah—yes, relations. Perhaps none.'

'Still, if you don't like to be seen, pull down your veil; though there is not much risk of being known by this light. Lots of strangers are here.'

She did as he suggested; and the act was a tacit acknowledgment that she accepted his offer.

Wildeve gave her his arm and took her down on the outside of the ring to the bottom of the dance, which they entered. In two minutes more they were involved in the figure and began working their way upwards to the top. Till they had advanced halfway thither Eustacia wished more than once that she had not yielded to his request; from the middle to the top she felt that, since she had come out to seek pleasure, she was only doing a natural thing to obtain it. Fairly launched into the ceaseless glides and whirls which their new position as top couple opened up to them, Eustacia's pulses began to move too quickly for longer rumination of any kind.

Through the length of five and twenty couples they threaded their giddy way, and a new vitality entered her form. The pale ray of evening lent a fascination to the experience. There is a certain degree and tone of light which tends to disturb the equilibrium of the senses, and to promote dangerously the tenderer moods; added to movement, it drives the emotions to rankness, the reason becoming sleepy and unperceiving in inverse proportion; and this light fell now upon these two from the disc of the moon. All the dancing girls felt the symptoms, but Eustacia most of all. The grass under their feet became trodden away, and the hard, beaten surface of the sod, when viewed aslant towards the moonlight, shone like a polished table. The air became quite still; the flag above the waggon which held the musicians clung to the pole, and the players appeared only in outline against the sky; except when the circular mouths of the trombone, ophicleide, and French horn gleamed out like huge eyes from the shade of their figures. The pretty dresses of the maids lost their subtler day colours and showed more or less of a misty white. Eustacia floated round and round on Wildeve's arm, her face rapt and statuesque; her soul had passed away from and for-

gotten her features, which were left empty and quiescent, as they always are when feeling goes beyond their register.

How near she was to Wildevé! it was terrible to think of. She could feel his breathing, and he, of course, could feel hers. How badly she had treated him! yet, here they were treading one measure. The enchantment of the dance surprised her. A clear line of difference divided like a tangible fence her experience within this maze of motion from her experience without it. Her beginning to dance had been like a change of atmosphere; outside, she had been steeped in arctic frigidity by comparison with the tropical sensations here. She had entered the dance from the troubled hours of her late life as one might enter a brilliant chamber after a night walk in a wood. Wildevé by himself would have been merely an agitation; Wildevé added to the dance, and the moonlight, and the secrecy, began to be a delight. Whether his personality supplied the greater part of this sweetly compounded feeling, or whether the dance and the scene weighed the more therein, was a nice point upon which Eustacia herself was entirely in a cloud.

People began to say 'Who are they?' but no invidious inquiries were made. Had Eustacia mingled with the other girls in their ordinary daily walks the case would have been different: here she was not inconvenienced by excessive inspection, for all were wrought to their brightest grace by the occasion. Like the planet Mercury surrounded by the lustre of sunset, her permanent brilliancy passed without much notice in the temporary glory of the situation.

As for Wildevé, his feelings are easy to guess. Obstacles were a ripening sun to his love, and he was at this moment in a delirium of exquisite misery. To clasp as his for five minutes what was another man's through all the rest of the year was a kind of thing he of all men could appreciate. He had long since begun to sigh again for Eustacia; indeed, it may be asserted that signing the marriage register with Thomasin was the natural signal to his heart to return to its first quarters, and that the extra complication of Eustacia's marriage was the one addition required to make that return compulsory.

Thus, for different reasons, what was to the rest an exhilarating movement was to these two a riding upon the whirlwind. The dance had come like an irresistible attack upon whatever sense of social order there was in their minds, to drive them back into old paths which were now doubly irregular. Through three dances in succession they spun their way; and then, fatigued with the incessant motion, Eustacia turned to quit the circle in which she had already remained too long. Wildevé led her to a grassy mound a few yards distant, where she sat down, her partner standing beside her. From the time that he addressed her at the beginning of the dance till now they had not exchanged a word.

'The dance and the walking have tired you?' he said tenderly.

'No; not greatly.'

'It is strange that we should have met here of all places, after missing each other so long.'

'We have missed because we tried to miss, I suppose.'

'Yes. But you began that proceeding—by breaking a promise.'

'It is scarcely worth while to talk of that now. We have formed other ties since then—you no less than I.'

'I am sorry to hear that your husband is ill.'

'He is not ill—only incapacitated.'

'Yes· that is what I mean. I sincerely sympathize with you in your trouble. Fate has treated you cruelly.'

She was silent awhile. 'Have you heard that he has chosen to work as a furze-cutter?' she said in a low, mournful voice.

'It has been mentioned to me,' answered Wildeve hesitatingly. 'But I hardly believed it.'

'It is true. What do you think of me as a furze-cutter's wife?'

'I think the same as ever of you, Eustacia. Nothing of that sort can degrade you: you ennoble the occupation of your husband.'

'I wish I could feel it.'

'Is there any chance of Mr. Yeobright getting better?'

'He thinks so. I doubt it.'

'I was quite surprised to hear that he had taken a cottage. I thought, in common with other people, that he would have taken you off to a home in Paris immediately after you had married him. "What a gay, bright future she had before her!" I thought. He will, I suppose, return there with you, if his sight gets strong again'

Observing that she did not reply he regarded her more closely. She was almost weeping. Images of a future never to be enjoyed, the revived sense of her bitter disappointment, the picture of the neighbours' suspended ridicule which was raised by Wildeve's words, had been too much for proud Eustacia's equanimity.

Wildeve could hardly control his own too forward feelings when he saw her silent perturbation. But he affected not to notice this, and she soon recovered her calmness.

'You did not intend to walk home by yourself?' he asked.

'O yes,' said Eustacia. 'What could hurt me on this heath, who have nothing?'

'The first half of my way home is the same as yours. I shall be glad to keep you company as far as Throope Corner.' Seeing that Eustacia sat on in hesitation he added, 'Perhaps you think it unwise to be seen in the same road with me after the events of last summer?'

'Indeed I think no such thing,' she said haughtily. 'I shall accept whose company I choose, for all that may be said by the miserable inhabitants of Egdon.'

'Then let us walk on—if you are ready. Our nearest way is towards that holly-bush with the dark shadow that you see down there.'

Eustacia arose, and walked beside him in the direction signified, brushing her way over the damping heath and fern, and followed by the strains of the

merrymakers, who still kept up the dance. The moon had now waxed bright and silvery, but the heath was proof against such illumination, and there was to be observed the striking scene of a dark, rayless tract of country, under an atmosphere charged from its zenith to its extremities with whitest light. To an eye above them their two faces would have appeared amid the expanse like two pearls on a table of ebony.

On this account the irregularities of the path were not visible, and Wild-eve occasionally stumbled; whilst Eustacia found it necessary to perform some graceful feats of balancing whenever a small tuft of heather or root of furze protruded itself through the grass of the narrow track and entangled her feet. At these junctures in her progress a hand was invariably stretched forward to steady her, holding her firmly until smooth ground was again reached, when the hand was again withdrawn to a respectful distance.

They performed the journey for the most part in silence, and drew near to Throope Corner, a few hundred yards from which a short path branched away to Eustacia's house. By degrees they discerned coming towards them a pair of human figures, apparently of the male sex.

When they came a little nearer Eustacia broke the silence by saying, 'One of those men is my husband. He promised to come to meet me.'

'And the other is my greatest enemy,' said Wildeve.

'It looks like Diggory Venn.'

'That is the man.'

'It is an awkward meeting,' said she; 'but such is my fortune. He knows too much about me, unless he could know more, and so prove to himself that what he now knows counts for nothing. Well, let it be: you must deliver me up to them.'

'You will think twice before you direct me to do that. Here is a man who has not forgotten an item in our meetings at Rainbarrow: he is in company with your husband. Which of them, seeing us together here, will believe that our meeting and dancing at the gipsy-party was by chance?'

'Very well,' she whispered gloomily. 'Leave me before they come up.'

Wildeve bade her a tender farewell, and plunged across the fern and furze, Eustacia slowly walking on. In two or three minutes she met her husband and his companion.

'My journey ends here for to-night, reddleman,' said Yeobright as soon as he perceived her. 'I turn back with this lady. Good night.'

'Good night, Mr. Yeobright,' said Venn. 'I hope to see you better soon.'

The moonlight shone directly upon Venn's face as he spoke, and revealed all its lines to Eustacia. He was looking suspiciously at her. That Venn's keen eye had discerned what Yeobright's feeble vision had not—a man in the act of withdrawing from Eustacia's side—was within the limits of the probable.

If Eustacia had been able to follow the reddleman she would soon have found striking confirmation of her thought. No sooner had Clym given her his arm and led her off the scene than the reddleman turned back from

the beaten track towards East Egdon, whither he had been strolling merely to accompany Clym in his walk, Diggory's van being again in the neighbourhood. Stretching out his long legs he crossed the pathless portion of the heath somewhat in the direction which Wildeve had taken. Only a man accustomed to nocturnal ramble could at this hour have descended those shaggy slopes with Venn's velocity without falling headlong into a pit, or snapping off his leg by jamming his foot into some rabbit-burrow. But Venn went on without much inconvenience to himself, and the course of his scamper was towards the Quiet Woman Inn. This place he reached in about half an hour, and he was well aware that no person who had been near Throope Corner when he started could have got down here before him.

The lonely inn was not yet closed, though scarcely an individual was there, the business done being chiefly with travellers who passed the inn on long journeys, and these had now gone on their way. Venn went to the public room, called for a mug of ale, and inquired of the maid in an indifferent tone if Mr. Wildeve was at home.

Thomasin sat in an inner room and heard Venn's voice. When customers were present she seldom showed herself, owing to her inherent dislike for the business; but perceiving that no one else was there to-night she came out.

'He is not at home yet, Diggory,' she said pleasantly. 'But I expected him sooner. He has been to East Egdon to buy a horse.'

'Did he wear a white wideawake?'

'Yes.'

'Then I saw him at Throope Corner, leading one home,' said Venn drily. 'A beauty, with a white face and a mane as black as night. He will soon be here, no doubt.' Rising and looking for a moment at the pure, sweet face of Thomasin, over which a shadow of sadness had passed since the time when he had last seen her, he ventured to add, 'Mr. Wildeve seems to be often away at this time.'

'O yes,' cried Thomasin in what was intended to be a tone of gaiety. 'Husbands will play the truant, you know. I wish you could tell me of some secret plan that would help me to keep him home at my will in the evenings.'

'I will consider if I know of one,' replied Venn in that same light tone which meant no lightness. And then he bowed in a manner of his own invention and moved to go. Thomasin offered him her hand; and without a sigh, though with food for many, the reddleman went out.

When Wildeve returned, a quarter of an hour later, Thomasin said simply, and in the abashed manner usual with her now, 'Where is the horse, Damon?'

'O, I have not bought it, after all. The man asks too much.'

'But somebody saw you at Throope Corner leading it home—a beauty, with a white face and a mane as black as night.'

'Ah!' said Wildeve, fixing his eyes upon her; 'who told you that?'

'Venn the reddleman.'

The expression of Wildev's face became curiously condensed. 'That is a mistake—it must have been some one else,' he said slowly and testily, for he perceived that Venn's counter-moves had begun again.

IV. ROUGH COERCION IS EMPLOYED

THOSE words of Thomasin, which seemed so little, but meant so much, remained in the ears of Diggory Venn: 'Help me to keep him home in the evenings.'

On this occasion Venn had arrived on Egdon Heath only to cross to the other side: he had no further connection with the interests of the Yeobright family, and he had a business of his own to attend to. Yet he suddenly began to feel himself drifting into the old track of manœuvring on Thomasin's account.

He sat in his van and considered. From Thomasin's words and manner he had plainly gathered that Wildev neglected her. For whom could he neglect her if not for Eustacia? Yet it was scarcely credible that things had come to such a head as to indicate that Eustacia systematically encouraged him. Venn resolved to reconnoitre somewhat carefully the lonely path which led across the hills from Wildev's dwelling to Clym's house at Alderworth.

At this time, as has been seen, Wildev was quite innocent of any pre-determined act of intrigue, and except at the dance on the green he had not once met Eustacia since her marriage. But that the spirit of intrigue was in him had been shown by a recent romantic habit of his: a habit of going out after dark and strolling towards Alderworth, there looking at the moon and stars, looking at Eustacia's house, and walking back at leisure.

Accordingly, when watching on the night after the festival, the reddleman saw him ascend by the little path, lean over the front gate of Clym's garden, sigh, and turn to go back again. It was plain that Wildev's intrigue was rather ideal than real. Venn retreated before him down the hill to a place where the path was merely a deep groove between the heather; here he mysteriously bent over the ground for a few minutes, and retired. When Wildev came on to that spot his ankle was caught by something, and he fell headlong.

As soon as he had recovered the power of respiration he sat up and listened. There was not a sound in the gloom beyond the spiritless stir of the summer wind. Feeling about for the obstacle which had flung him down, he discovered that two tufts of heath had been tied together across the path, forming a loop, which to a traveller was certain overthrow. Wildev pulled off the string that bound them, and went on with tolerable quickness. On reaching home he found the cord to be of a reddish colour. It was just what he had expected.

Although his weaknesses were not specially those akin to physical fear,

this species of *coup-de-Jarnac* from one he knew too well troubled the mind of Wildeve. But his movements were unaltered thereby. A night or two later he again went up the hill to Alderworth, taking the precaution of keeping out of the path. The sense that he was watched, that craft was employed to circumvent his errant tastes, added piquancy to a journey so entirely sentimental, so long as the danger was of no fearful sort. He imagined that Venn and Mrs. Yeobright were in league, and felt that there was a certain legitimacy in combating such a coalition.

The heath to-night appeared to be totally deserted; and Wildeve, after looking over Eustacia's garden gate for some little time, with a cigar in his mouth, was tempted by the fascination that emotional smuggling had for his nature to advance towards the window, which was not quite closed, the blind being only partly drawn down. He could see into the room, and Eustacia was sitting there alone. Wildeve contemplated her for a minute, and then retreating into the heath beat the ferns lightly, whereupon moths flew out alarmed. Securing one, he returned to the window, and holding the moth to the chink, opened his hand. The moth made towards the candle upon Eustacia's table, hovered round it two or three times, and flew into the flame.

Eustacia started up. This had been a well-known signal in old times when Wildeve had used to come secretly wooing to Mistover. She at once knew that Wildeve was outside, but before she could consider what to do her husband came in from upstairs. Eustacia's face burnt crimson at the unexpected collision of incidents, and filled it with an animation that it too frequently lacked.

'You have a very high colour, dearest,' said Yeobright, when he came close enough to see it. 'Your appearance would be no worse if it were always so.'

'I am warm,' said Eustacia. 'I think I will go into the air for a few minutes.'

'Shall I go with you?'

'O no. I am only going to the gate.'

She arose, but before she had time to get out of the room a loud rapping began upon the front door.

'I'll go—I'll go,' said Eustacia in an unusually quick tone for her; and she glanced eagerly towards the window whence the moth had flown; but nothing appeared there.

'You had better not at this time of the evening,' he said. Clym stepped before her into the passage, and Eustacia waited, her somnolent manner covering her inner heat and agitation.

She listened, and Clym opened the door. No words were uttered outside, and presently he closed it and came back, saying, 'Nobody was there. I wonder what that could have meant?'

He was left to wonder during the rest of the evening, for no explanation offered itself, and Eustacia said nothing, the additional fact that she knew of only adding more mystery to the performance.

Meanwhile a little drama had been acted outside which saved Eustacia from all possibility of compromising herself that evening at least. Whilst he had been preparing his moth-signal another person had come behind him up to the gate. This man, who carried a gun in his hand, looked on for a moment at the other's operation by the window, walked up to the house, knocked at the door, and then vanished round the corner and over the hedge.

'Damn him!' said Wildeve. 'He has been watching me again.'

As his signal had been rendered futile by this uproarious rapping Wildeve withdrew, passed out at the gate, and walked quickly down the path without thinking of anything except getting away unnoticed. Half-way down the hill, the path ran near a knot of stunted hollies, which in the general darkness of the scene stood as the pupil in a black eye. When Wildeve reached this point a report startled his ear, and a few spent gunshots fell among the leaves around him.

There was no doubt that he himself was the cause of that gun's discharge; and he rushed into the clump of hollies, beating the bushes furiously with his stick; but nobody was there. This attack was a more serious matter than the last, and it was some time before Wildeve recovered his equanimity. A new and most unpleasant system of menace had begun, and the intent appeared to be to do him grievous bodily harm. Wildeve had looked upon Venn's first attempt as a species of horse-play, which the reddleman had indulged in for want of knowing better; but now the boundary-line was passed which divides the annoying from the perilous.

Had Wildeve known how thoroughly in earnest Venn had become he might have been still more alarmed. The reddleman had been almost exasperated by the sight of Wildeve outside Clym's house, and he was prepared to go to any lengths short of absolutely shooting him, to terrify the young innkeeper out of his recalcitrant impulses. The doubtful legitimacy of such rough coercion did not disturb the mind of Venn. It troubles few such minds in such cases, and sometimes this is not to be regretted. From the impeachment of Strafford to Farmer Lynch's short way with the scamps of Virginia there have been many triumphs of justice which are mockeries of law.

About half a mile below Clym's secluded dwelling lay a hamlet where lived one of the two constables who preserved the peace in the parish of Alderworth, and Wildeve went straight to the constable's cottage. Almost the first thing that he saw on opening the door was the constable's truncheon hanging to a nail, as if to assure him that here were the means to his purpose. On inquiry, however, of the constable's wife he learnt that the constable was not at home. Wildeve said he would wait.

The minutes ticked on, and the constable did not arrive. Wildeve cooled down from his state of high indignation to a restless dissatisfaction with himself, the scene, the constable's wife, and the whole set of circumstances. He arose and left the house. Altogether, the experience of that eve-

ning had had a cooling, not to say a chilling, effect on misdirected tenderness, and Wildeve was in no mood to ascend again to Alderworth after nightfall in hope of a stray glance from Eustacia.

Thus far the reddleman had been tolerably successful in his rude contrivances for keeping down Wildeve's inclination to rove in the evening. He had nipped in the bud the possible meeting between Eustacia and her old lover this very night. But he had not anticipated that the tendency of his action would be to divert Wildeve's movement rather than to stop it. The gambling with the guineas had not conduced to make him a welcome guest to Clym; but to call upon his wife's relative was natural, and he was determined to see Eustacia. It was necessary to choose some less untoward hour than ten o'clock at night. 'Since it is unsafe to go in the evening,' he said, 'I'll go by day.'

Meanwhile Venn had left the heath and gone to call upon Mrs. Yeobright, with whom he had been on friendly terms since she had learnt what a providential counter-move he had made towards the restitution of the family guineas. She wondered at the lateness of his call, but had no objection to see him.

He gave her a full account of Clym's affliction, and of the state in which he was living; then, referring to Thomasin, touched gently upon the apparent sadness of her days. 'Now, ma'am, depend upon it,' he said, 'you couldn't do a better thing for either of 'em than to make yourself at home in their houses, even if there should be a little rebuff at first.'

'Both she and my son disobeyed me in marrying; therefore I have no interest in their households. Their troubles are of their own making.' Mrs. Yeobright tried to speak severely; but the account of her son's state had moved her more than she cared to show.

'Your visits would make Wildeve walk straighter than he is inclined to do, and might prevent unhappiness up the hill.'

'What do you mean?'

'I saw something to-night up there which I didn't like at all. I wish your son's house and Mr. Wildeve's were a hundred miles apart instead of two or three.'

'Then there *was* an understanding between him and Clym's wife when he made a fool of Thomasin!'

'We'll hope there's no understanding now.'

'And our hope will probably be very vain. O Clym! O Thomasin!'

'There's no harm done yet. In fact, I've persuaded Wildeve to mind his own business.'

'How?'

'O, not by talking—by a plan of mine called the silent system.'

'I hope you'll succeed.'

'I shall if you help me by calling and making friends with your son. You'll have a chance then of using your eyes.'

'Well, since it has come to this,' said Mrs. Yeobright sadly, 'I will own

to you, reddleman, that I thought of going. I should be much happier if we were reconciled. The marriage is unalterable, my life may be cut short, and I should wish to die in peace. He is my only son; and since sons are made of such stuff I am not sorry I have no other. As for Thomasin, I never expected much from her; and she has not disappointed me. But I forgave her long ago; and I forgive him now. I'll go.'

At this very time of the reddleman's conversation with Mrs. Yeobright at Blooms-End another conversation on the same subject was languidly proceeding at Alderworth.

All the day Clym had borne himself as if his mind were too full of its own matter to allow him to care about outward things, and his words now showed what had occupied his thoughts. It was just after the mysterious knocking that he began the theme. 'Since I have been away to-day, Eustacia, I have considered that something must be done to heal up this ghastly breach between my dear mother and myself. It troubles me.'

'What do you propose to do?' said Eustacia abstractedly, for she could not clear away from her the excitement caused by Wildeve's recent manoeuvre for an interview.

'You seem to take a very mild interest in what I propose, little or much,' said Clym, with tolerable warmth.

'You mistake me,' she answered, reviving at his reproach. 'I am only thinking.'

'What of?'

'Partly of that moth whose skeleton is getting burnt up in the wick of the candle,' she said slowly. 'But you know I always take an interest in what you say.'

'Very well, dear. Then I think I must go and call upon her.' . . . He went on with tender feeling: 'It is a thing I am not at all too proud to do, and only a fear that I might irritate her has kept me away so long. But I must do something. It is wrong in me to allow this sort of thing to go on.'

'What have you to blame yourself about?'

'She is getting old, and her life is lonely, and I am her only son.'

'She has Thomasin.'

'Thomasin is not her daughter; and if she were that would not excuse me. But this is beside the point. I have made up my mind to go to her, and all I wish to ask you is whether you will do your best to help me—that is, forget the past; and if she shows her willingness to be reconciled, meet her half-way by welcoming her to our house, or by accepting a welcome to hers?'

At first Eustacia closed her lips as if she would rather do anything on the whole globe than what he suggested. But the lines of her mouth softened with thought, though not so far as they might have softened; and she said, 'I will put nothing in your way; but after what has passed it is asking too much that I go and make advances.'

'You never distinctly told me what did pass between you.'

'I could not do it then, nor can I now. Sometimes more bitterness is sown in five minutes than can be got rid of in a whole life; and that may be the case here.' She paused a few moments, and added, 'If you had never returned to your native place, Clym, what a blessing it would have been for you! . . . It has altered the destinies of——'

'Three people.'

'Five,' Eustacia thought; but she kept that in.

V. THE JOURNEY ACROSS THE HEATH

THURSDAY, the thirty-first of August, was one of a series of days during which snug houses were stifling, and when cool draughts were treats; when cracks appeared in clayey gardens, and were called 'earth-quakes' by apprehensive children; when loose spokes were discovered in the wheels of carts and carriages; and when stinging insects haunted the air, the earth, and every drop of water that was to be found.

In Mrs. Yeobright's garden large-leaved plants of a tender kind flagged by ten o'clock in the morning; rhubarb bent downward at eleven; and even stiff cabbages were limp by noon.

It was about eleven o'clock on this day that Mrs. Yeobright started across the heath towards her son's house, to do her best in getting reconciled with him and Eustacia, in conformity with her words to the reddleman. She had hoped to be well advanced in her walk before the heat of the day was at its highest, but after setting out she found that this was not to be done. The sun had branded the whole heath with his mark, even the purple heath-flowers having put on a brownness under the dry blazes of the few preceding days. Every valley was filled with air like that of a kiln, and the clean quartz sand of the winter water-courses, which formed summer paths, had undergone a species of incineration since the drought had set in.

In cool, fresh weather Mrs. Yeobright would have found no inconvenience in walking to Alderworth; but the present torrid attack made the journey a heavy undertaking for a woman past middle age; and at the end of the third mile she wished that she had hired Fairway to drive her a portion at least of the distance. But from the point at which she had arrived it was as easy to reach Clym's house as to get home again. So she went on, the air around her pulsating silently, and oppressing the earth with lassitude. She looked at the sky overhead, and saw that the sapphirine hue of the zenith in spring and early summer had been replaced by a metallic violet.

Occasionally she came to a spot where independent worlds of ephemerons were passing their time in mad carousal, some in the air, some on the hot ground and vegetation, some in the tepid and stringy water of a nearly dried pool. All the shallower ponds had decreased to a vaporous mud amid which the maggoty shapes of innumerable obscene creatures could be

indistinctly seen, heaving and wallowing with enjoyment. Being a woman not disinclined to philosophize she sometimes sat down under her umbrella to rest and to watch their happiness, for a certain hopefulness as to the result of her visit gave ease to her mind, and between important thoughts left it free to dwell on any infinitesimal matter which caught her eyes.

Mrs. Yeobright had never before been to her son's house, and its exact position was unknown to her. She tried one ascending path and another, and found that they led her astray. Retracing her steps she came again to an open level, where she perceived at a distance a man at work. She went towards him and inquired the way.

The labourer pointed out the direction, and added, 'Do you see that furze-cutter, ma'am, going up that footpath yond?'

Mrs. Yeobright strained her eyes, and at last said that she did perceive him.

'Well, if you follow him you can make no mistake. He's going to the same place, ma'am.'

She followed the figure indicated. He appeared of a russet hue, not more distinguishable from the scene around him than the green caterpillar from the leaf it feeds on. His progress when actually walking was more rapid than Mrs. Yeobright's; but she was enabled to keep at an equable distance from him by his habit of stopping whenever he came to a brake of brambles, where he paused awhile. On coming in her turn to each of these spots she found half a dozen long limp brambles which he had cut from the bush during his halt and laid out straight beside the path. They were evidently intended for furze-faggot bonds which he meant to collect on his return.

The silent being who thus occupied himself seemed to be of no more account in life than an insect. He appeared as a mere parasite of the heath, fretting its surface in his daily labour as a moth frets a garment, entirely engrossed with its products, having no knowledge of anything in the world but fern, furze, heath, lichens, and moss.

The furze-cutter was so absorbed in the business of his journey that he never turned his head; and his leather-legged and gauntleted form at length became to her as nothing more than a moving handpost to show her the way. Suddenly she was attracted to his individuality by observing peculiarities in his walk. It was a gait she had seen somewhere before; and the gait revealed the man to her, as the gait of Ahimaaz in the distant plain made him known to the watchman of the king. 'His walk is exactly as my husband's used to be,' she said; and then the thought burst upon her that the furze-cutter was her son.

She was scarcely able to familiarize herself with this strange reality. She had been told that Clym was in the habit of cutting furze, but she had supposed that he occupied himself with the labour only at odd times, by way of useful pastime; yet she now beheld him as a furze-cutter and nothing more—wearing the regulation dress of the craft, and thinking the regulation thoughts, to judge by his motions. Planning a dozen hasty schemes for at

once preserving him and Eustacia from this mode of life she throbbingly followed the way, and saw him enter his own door.

At one side of Clym's house was a knoll, and on the top of the knoll a clump of fir trees so highly thrust up into the sky that their foliage from a distance appeared as a black spot in the air above the crown of the hill. On reaching this place Mrs. Yeobright felt distressingly agitated, weary, and unwell. She ascended, and sat down under their shade to recover herself, and to consider how best to break the ground with Eustacia, so as not to irritate a woman underneath whose apparent indolence lurked passions even stronger and more active than her own.

The trees beneath which she sat were singularly battered, rude, and wild, and for a few minutes Mrs. Yeobright dismissed thoughts of her own storm-broken and exhausted state to contemplate theirs. Not a bough in the nine trees which composed the group but was splintered, lopped, and distorted by the fierce weather that there held them at its mercy whenever it prevailed. Some were blasted and split as if by lightning, black stains as from fire marking their sides, while the ground at their feet was strewn with dead fir-needles and heaps of cones blown down in the gales of past years. The place was called the Devil's Bellows, and it was only necessary to come there on a March or November night to discover the forcible reasons for that name. On the present heated afternoon, when no perceptible wind was blowing, the trees kept up a perpetual moan which one could hardly believe to be caused by the air.

Here she sat for twenty minutes or more ere she could summon resolution to go down to the door, her courage being lowered to zero by her physical lassitude. To any other person than a mother it might have seemed a little humiliating that she, the elder of the two women, should be the first to make advances. But Mrs. Yeobright had well considered all that, and she only thought how best to make her visit appear to Eustacia not abject but wise.

From her elevated position the exhausted woman could perceive the back roof of the house below, and the garden and the whole enclosure of the little domicile. And now, at the moment of rising, she saw a second man approaching the gate. His manner was peculiar, hesitating, and not that of a person come on business or by invitation. He surveyed the house with interest, and then walked round and scanned the outer boundary of the garden, as one might have done had it been the birthplace of Shakespeare, the prison of Mary Stuart, or the Château of Hougomont. After passing round and again reaching the gate he went in. Mrs. Yeobright was vexed at this, having reckoned on finding her son and his wife by themselves; but a moment's thought showed her that the presence of an acquaintance would take off the awkwardness of her first appearance in the house, by confining the talk to general matters until she had begun to feel comfortable with them. She came down the hill to the gate, and looked into the hot garden.

There lay the cat asleep on the bare gravel of the path, as if beds, rugs, and carpets were unendurable. The leaves of the hollyhocks hung like half-closed umbrellas, the sap almost simmered in the stems, and foliage with a smooth surface glared like metallic mirrors. A small apple tree, of the sort called Ratheripe, grew just inside the gate, the only one which thrived in the garden, by reason of the lightness of the soil; and among the fallen apples on the ground beneath were wasps rolling drunk with the juice, or creeping about the little caves in each fruit which they had eaten out before stupefied by its sweetness. By the door lay Clym's furze-hook and the last handful of faggot-bonds she had seen him gather; they had plainly been thrown down there as he entered the house.

VI. A CONJUNCTURE, AND ITS RESULT UPON THE PEDESTRIAN

WILDEVE, as has been stated, was determined to visit Eustacia boldly, by day, and on the easy terms of a relation, since the reddleman had spied out and spoilt his walks to her by night. The spell that she had thrown over him in the moonlight dance made it impossible for a man having no strong puritan force within him to keep away altogether. He merely calculated on meeting her and her husband in an ordinary manner, chatting a little while, and leaving again. Every outward sign was to be conventional; but the one great fact would be there to satisfy him: he would see her. He did not even desire Clym's absence, since it was just possible that Eustacia might resent any situation which could compromise her dignity as a wife, whatever the state of her heart towards him. Women were often so.

He went accordingly; and it happened that the time of his arrival coincided with that of Mrs. Yeobright's pause on the hill near the house. When he had looked round the premises in the manner she had noticed he went and knocked at the door. There was a few minutes' interval, and then the key turned in the lock, the door opened, and Eustacia herself confronted him.

Nobody could have imagined from her bearing now that here stood the woman who had joined with him in the impassioned dance of the week before, unless indeed he could have penetrated below the surface and gauged the real depth of that still stream.

'I hope you reached home safely?' said Wildeve.

'O yes,' she carelessly returned.

'And were you not tired the next day? I feared you might be.'

'I was rather. You need not speak low—nobody will overhear us. My small servant is gone on an errand to the village.'

'Then Clym is not at home?'

'Yes, he is.'

'O! I thought that perhaps you had locked the door because you were alone and were afraid of tramps.'

'No—here is my husband.'

They had been standing in the entry. Closing the front door and turning the key, as before, she threw open the door of the adjoining room and asked him to walk in. Wildeve entered, the room appearing to be empty; but as soon as he had advanced a few steps he started. On the hearthrug lay Clym asleep. Beside him were the leggings, thick boots, leather gloves, and sleeve-waistcoat in which he worked.

'You may go in; you will not disturb him,' she said, following behind. 'My reason for fastening the door is that he may not be intruded upon by any chance comer while lying here, if I should be in the garden or upstairs.'

'Why is he sleeping there?' said Wildeve in low tones.

'He is very weary. He went out at half-past four this morning, and has been working ever since. He cuts furze because it is the only thing he can do that does not put any strain upon his poor eyes.' The contrast between the sleeper's appearance and Wildeve's at this moment was painfully apparent to Eustacia, Wildeve being elegantly dressed in a new summer suit and light hat; and she continued: 'Ah! you don't know how differently he appeared when I first met him, though it is such a little while ago. His hands were as white and soft as mine; and look at them now, how rough and brown they are! His complexion is by nature fair, and that rusty look he has now, all of a colour with his leather clothes, is caused by the burning of the sun.'

'Why does he go out at all?' Wildeve whispered.

'Because he hates to be idle; though what he earns doesn't add much to our exchequer. However, he says that when people are living upon their capital they must keep down current expenses by turning a penny where they can.'

'The fates have not been kind to you, Eustacia Yeobright.'

'I have nothing to thank them for.'

'Nor has he—except for their one great gift to him.'

'What's that?'

Wildeve looked her in the eyes.

Eustacia blushed for the first time that day. 'Well, I am a questionable gift,' she said quietly. 'I thought you meant the gift of content—which he has, and I have not.'

'I can understand content in such a case—though how the outward situation can attract him puzzles me.'

'That's because you don't know him. He's an enthusiast about ideas, and careless about outward things. He often reminds me of the Apostle Paul.'

'I am glad to hear that he's so grand in character as that.'

'Yes; but the worst of it is that though Paul was excellent as a man in the Bible he would hardly have done in real life.'

Their voices had instinctively dropped lower, though at first they had taken no particular care to avoid awakening Clym. 'Well, if that means that your marriage is a misfortune to you, you know who is to blame,' said Wildeve.

'The marriage is no misfortune,' she said, showing more emotion than had as yet appeared in her. 'It is simply the accident which has happened since that has been the cause of my ruin. I have certainly got thistles for figs in a worldly sense, but how could I tell what time would bring forth?'

'Sometimes, Eustacia, I think it is a judgment upon you. You rightly belonged to me, you know; and I had no idea of losing you.'

'No, it was not my fault. Two could not belong to you; and remember that, before I was aware, you turned aside to another woman. It was cruel levity in you to do that. I never dreamt of playing such a game on my side till you began it on yours.'

'I meant nothing by it,' replied Wildeve. 'It was a mere interlude. Men are given to the trick of having a passing fancy for somebody else in the midst of a permanent love, which reasserts itself afterwards just as before. On account of your rebellious manner to me I was tempted to go further than I should have done; and when you still would keep playing the same tantalizing part I went further still, and married her.' Turning and looking again at the unconscious form of Clym, he murmured, 'I am afraid that you don't value your prize, Clym. . . . He ought to be happier than I in one thing at least. He may know what it is to come down in the world, and to be afflicted with a great personal calamity; but he probably doesn't know what it is to lose the woman he loved.'

'He is not ungrateful for winning her,' whispered Eustacia, 'and in that respect he is a good man. Many women would go far for such a husband. But do I desire unreasonably much in wanting what is called life—music, poetry, passion, war, and all the beating and pulsing that is going on in the great arteries of the world? That was the shape of my youthful dream; but I did not get it. Yet I thought I saw the way to it in my Clym.'

'And you only married him on that account?'

'There you mistake me. I married him because I loved him, but I won't say that I didn't love him partly because I thought I saw a promise of that life in him.'

'You have dropped into your old mournful key.'

'But I am not going to be depressed,' she cried excitedly. 'I began a new system by going to that dance, and I mean to stick to it. Clym can sing merrily; why should not I?'

Wildeve looked thoughtfully at her. 'It is easier to say you will sing than to do it; though if I could I would encourage you in your attempt. But as life means nothing to me, without one thing which is now impossible, you will forgive me for not being able to encourage you.'

'Damon, what is the matter with you, that you speak like that?' she asked, raising her deep shady eyes to his.

'That's a thing I shall never tell plainly; and perhaps if I try to tell you in riddles you will not care to guess them.'

Eustacia remained silent for a minute, and she said. 'We are in a strange relationship to-day. You mince matters to an uncommon nicety. You mean, Damon, that you still love me. Well, that gives me sorrow, for I am not made so entirely happy by my marriage that I am willing to spurn you for the information, as I ought to do. But we have said too much about this. Do you mean to wait until my husband is awake?'

'I thought to speak to him; but it is unnecessary. Eustacia, if I offend you by not forgetting you, you are right to mention it; but do not talk of spurning.'

She did not reply, and they stood looking musingly at Clym as he slept on in that profound sleep which is the result of physical labour carried on in circumstances that wake no nervous fear.

'God, how I envy him that sweet sleep!' said Wildeve. 'I have not slept like that since I was a boy—years and years ago.'

While they thus watched him a click at the gate was audible, and a knock came to the door. Eustacia went to a window and looked out.

Her countenance changed. First she became crimson, and then the red subsided till it even partially left her lips.

'Shall I go away?' said Wildeve, standing up.

'I hardly know.'

'Who is it?'

'Mrs. Yeobright. O, what she said to me that day! I cannot understand this visit—what does she mean? And she suspects that past time of ours.'

'I am in your hands. If you think she had better not see me here I'll go into the next room.'

'Well, yes: go.'

Wildeve at once withdrew; but before he had been half a minute in the adjoining apartment Eustacia came after him.

'No,' she said, 'we won't have any of this. If she comes in she must see you—I have done no wrong. But how can I open the door to her, when she dislikes me—wishes to see not me, but her son? I won't open the door!'

Mrs. Yeobright knocked again more loudly.

'Her knocking will, in all likelihood, awaken him,' continued Eustacia; 'and then he will let her in himself. Ah—listen.'

They could hear Clym moving in the other room, as if disturbed by the knocking, and he uttered the word 'Mother.'

'Yes—he is awake—he will go to the door,' she said, with a breath of relief. 'Come this way. I have a bad name with her, and you must not be seen. Thus I am obliged to act by stealth, not because I do ill, but because others are pleased to say so.'

By this time she had taken him to the back door which was open, disclosing a path leading down the garden. 'Now, one word, Damon,' she remarked as he stepped forth. 'This is your first visit here: let it be your last. We have been hot lovers in our time, but it won't do now. Good-bye.'

'Good-bye,' said Wildeve. 'I have had all I came for, and I am satisfied.'

'What was it?'

'A sight of you. Upon my eternal honour I came for no more.'

Wildeve kissed his hand to the beautiful girl he addressed, and passed into the garden, where she watched him down the path, over the stile at the end, and into the ferns outside, which brushed his hips as he went along, and because lost in their thickets. When he had quite gone she slowly turned, and directed her attention to the interior of the house.

But it was possible that her presence might not be desired by Clym and his mother at this moment of their first meeting, or that it would be superfluous. At all events, she was in no hurry to meet Mrs. Yeobright. She resolved to wait till Clym came to look for her, and glided back into the garden. Here she idly occupied herself for a few minutes, till finding no notice was taken of her she again retraced her steps, advancing to the front entrance, where she listened for voices in the parlour. But hearing none she opened the door and went in. To her astonishment Clym lay precisely as Wildeve and herself had left him, his sleep apparently unbroken. He had been disturbed and made to dream and murmur by the knocking, but he had not awakened. Eustacia hastened to the door, and in spite of her reluctance to open it to a woman who had spoken of her so bitterly, she unfastened it and looked out. Nobody was to be seen. There, by the scraper, lay Clym's hook and the handful of faggot-bonds he had brought home; in front of her were the empty path, the garden gate standing slightly ajar; and, beyond, the great valley of purple heath thrilling silently in the sun. Mrs. Yeobright was gone.

Clym's mother was at this time following a path which lay hidden from Eustacia by a shoulder of the hill. Her walk thither from the garden gate had been hasty and determined, as of a woman who was now no less anxious to escape from the scene than she had previously been to enter it. Her eyes were fixed on the ground; within her two sights were graven—that of Clym's hook and brambles at the door, and that of a woman's face at a window. Her lips trembled, becoming unnaturally thin, as she murmured, 'Tis too much—Clym, how can he bear to do it! He is at home; and yet he lets her shut the door against me!'

In her anxiety to get out of the direct view of the house she had diverged from the straightest path homeward, and while looking about to regain it she came upon a little boy gathering whortle-berries in a hollow. The boy was Johnny Nunsuch, who had been Eustacia's stoker at the bonfire, and, with the tendency of a minute body to gravitate towards a greater,

he began hovering round Mrs. Yeobright as soon as she appeared, and trotted on beside her without perceptible consciousness of his act.

Mrs. Yeobright spoke to him as one in a mesmeric sleep. 'Tis a long way home, my child, and we shall not get there till evening.'

'I shall,' said her small companion. 'I am going to play marnels afore supper, and we go to supper at six o'clock, because father comes home. Does your father come home at six, too?'

'No: he never comes; nor my son either, nor anybody.'

'What have made you so down? Have you seen a ooser?'

'I have seen what's worse—a woman's face looking at me through a window-pane.'

'Is that a bad sight?'

'Yes. It is always a bad sight to see a woman looking out at a weary wayfarer and not letting her in.'

'Once when I went to Throope Great Pond to catch effets I seed myself looking up at myself, and I was frightened and jumped back like anything.'

... 'If they had only shown signs of meeting my advances half-way how well it might have been done! But there is no chance. Shut out! She must have set him against me. Can there be beautiful bodies without hearts inside? I think so. I would not have done it against a neighbour's cat on such a fiery day as this!'

'What is it you say?'

'Never again—never! Not even if they send for me!'

'You must be a very curious woman to talk like that.'

'O no, not at all,' she said, returning to the boy's prattle. 'Most people who grow up and have children talk as I do. When you grow up your mother will talk as I do too.'

'I hope she won't; because 'tis very bad to talk nonsense.'

'Yes, child; it is nonsense, I suppose. Are you not nearly spent with the heat?'

'Yes. But not so much as you be.'

'How do you know?'

'Your face is white and wet, and your head is hanging-down-like.'

'Ah, I am exhausted from inside.'

'Why do you, every time you take a step, go like this?' The child 'in speaking gave to his motion the jerk and limp of an invalid.

'Because I have a burden which is more than I can bear.'

The little boy remained silently pondering, and they tottered on side by side until more than a quarter of an hour had elapsed, when Mrs. Yeobright, whose weakness plainly increased, said to him, 'I must sit down here to rest.'

When she had seated herself he looked long in her face and said, 'How funny you draw your breath—like a lamb when you drive him till he's nearly done for. Do you always draw your breath like that?'

'Not always.' Her voice was now so low as to be scarcely above a whisper.

'You will go to sleep there, I suppose, won't you? You have shut your eyes already.'

'No. I shall not sleep much till—another day, and then I hope to have a long, long one—very long. Now can you tell me if Bottom Pond is dry this summer?'

'Bottom Pond is, but Moreford Pool isn't, because he is deep, and is never dry—'tis just over there.'

'Is the water clear?'

'Yes, middling—except where the heath-croppers walk into it.'

'Then, take this, and go as fast as you can, and dip me up the clearest you can find. I am very faint.'

She drew from the small willow reticule that she carried in her hand an old-fashioned china teacup without a handle; it was one of half a dozen of the same sort lying in the reticule, which she had preserved ever since her childhood, and had brought with her to-day as a small present for Clym and Eustacia.

The boy started on his errand, and soon came back with the water, such as it was. Mrs. Yeobright attempted to drink, but it was so warm as to give her nausea, and she threw it away. Afterwards she still remained sitting, with her eyes closed.

The boy waited, played near her, caught several of the little brown butterflies which abounded, and then said as he waited again, 'I like going on better than biding still. Will you soon start again?'

'I don't know.'

'I wish I might go on by myself,' he resumed, fearing, apparently, that he was to be pressed into some unpleasant service. 'Do you want me any more, please?'

Mrs. Yeobright made no reply.

'What shall I tell mother?' the boy continued.

'Tell her you have seen a broken-hearted woman cast off by her son.'

Before quite leaving her he threw upon her face a wistful glance, as if he had misgivings on the generosity of forsaking her thus. He gazed into her face in a vague, wondering manner, like that of one examining some strange old manuscript the key to whose characters is undiscoverable. He was not so young as to be absolutely without a sense that sympathy was demanded, he was not old enough to be free from the terror felt in childhood at beholding misery in adult quarters hitherto deemed impregnable; and whether she were in a position to cause trouble or to suffer from it, whether she and her affliction were something to pity or something to fear, it was beyond him to decide. He lowered his eyes and went on without another word. Before he had gone half a mile he had forgotten all about her, except that she was a woman who had sat down to rest.

Mrs. Yeobright's exertions, physical and emotional, had well-nigh pros-

trated her; but she continued to creep along in short stages with long breaks between. The sun had now got far to the west of south and stood directly in her face, like some merciless incendiary, brand in hand, waiting to consume her. With the departure of the boy all visible animation disappeared from the landscape, though the intermittent husky notes of the male grasshoppers from every tuft of furze were enough to show that amid the prostration of the larger animal species an unseen insect world was busy in all the fulness of life.

At length she reached a slope about two-thirds of the whole distance from Alderworth to her own home where a little patch of shepherd's-thyme intruded upon the path; and she sat down upon the perfumed mat it formed there. In front of her a colony of ants had established a thoroughfare across the way, where they toiled a never-ending and heavy-laden throng. To look down upon them was like observing a city street from the top of a tower. She remembered that this bustle of ants had been in progress for years at the same spot—doubtless those of the old times were the ancestors of these which walked there now. She leant back to obtain more thorough rest, and the soft eastern portion of the sky was as great a relief to her eyes as the thyme was to her head. While she looked a heron arose on that side of the sky and flew on with his face towards the sun. He had come dripping wet from some pool in the valleys, and as he flew the edges and lining of his wings, his thighs, and his breast were so caught by the bright sunbeams that he appeared as if formed of burnished silver. Up in the zenith where he was seemed a free and happy place, away from all contact with the earthly ball to which she was pinioned; and she wished that she could arise uncrushed from its surface and fly as he flew then.

But, being a mother, it was inevitable that she should soon cease to ruminate upon her own condition. Had the track of her next thought been marked by a streak in the air, like the path of a meteor, it would have shown a direction contrary to the heron's, and have descended to the eastward upon the roof of Clym's house.

VII. THE TRAGIC MEETING OF TWO OLD FRIENDS

HE in the meantime had aroused himself from sleep, sat up, and looked around. Eustacia was sitting in a chair hard by him, and though she held a book in her hand she had not looked into it for some time.

'Well, indeed!' said Clym, brushing his eyes with his hands. 'How soundly I have slept! I have had such a tremendous dream, too: one I shall never forget.'

'I thought you had been dreaming,' said she.

'Yes. It was about my mother. I dreamt that I took you to her house

to make up differences, and when we got there we couldn't get in, though she kept on crying to us for help. However, dreams are dreams. What o'clock is it, Eustacia?'

'Half-past two.'

'So late, is it? I didn't mean to stay so long. By the time I have had something to eat it will be after three.'

'Ann is not come back from the village, and I thought I would let you sleep on till she returned.'

Clym went to the window and looked out. Presently he said, musingly, 'Week after week passes, and yet mother does not come. I thought I should have heard something from her long before this.'

Misgiving, regret, fear, resolution, ran their swift course of expression in Eustacia's dark eyes. She was face to face with a monstrous difficulty, and she resolved to get free of it by postponement.

'I must certainly go to Blooms-End soon,' he continued, 'and I think I had better go alone.' He picked up his leggings and gloves, threw them down again, and added, 'As dinner will be so late to-day I will not go back to the heath, but work in the garden till the evening, and then, when it will be cooler, I will walk to Blooms-End. I am quite sure that if I make a little advance mother will be willing to forget all. It will be rather late before I can get home, as I shall not be able to do the distance either way in less than an hour and a half. But you will not mind for one evening, dear? What are you thinking of to make you look so abstracted?'

'I cannot tell you,' she said heavily. 'I wish we didn't live here, Clym. The world seems all wrong in this place.'

'Well—if we make it so. I wonder if Thomasin has been to Blooms-End lately. I hope so. But probably not, as she is, I believe, expecting to be confined in a month or so. I wish I had thought of that before. Poor mother must indeed be very lonely.'

'I don't like you going to-night.'

'Why not to-night?'

'Something may be said which will terribly injure me.'

'My mother is not vindictive,' said Clym, his colour faintly rising.

'But I wish you would not go,' Eustacia repeated in a low tone. 'If you agree not to go to-night I promise to go by myself to her house to-morrow, and make it up with her, and wait till you fetch me.'

'Why do you want to do that at this particular time, when at every previous time that I have proposed it you have refused?'

'I cannot explain further than that I should like to see her alone before you go,' she answered, with an impatient move of her head, and looking at him with an anxiety more frequently seen upon those of a sanguine temperament than upon such as herself.

'Well, it is very odd that just when I had decided to go myself you should want to do what I proposed long ago. If I wait for you to go to-morrow another day will be lost; and I know I shall be unable to rest

another night without having been. I want to get this settled, and will. You must visit her afterwards: it will be all the same.'

'I could even go with you now?'

'You could scarcely walk there and back without a longer rest than I shall take. No, not to-night, Eustacia.'

'Let it be as you say, then,' she replied in the quiet way of one who, though willing to ward off evil consequences by a mild effort, would let events fall out as they might sooner than wrestle hard to direct them.

Clym then went into the garden; and a thoughtful languor stole over Eustacia for the remainder of the afternoon, which her husband attributed to the heat of the weather.

In the evening he set out on the journey. Although the heat of summer was yet intense the days had considerably shortened, and before he had advanced a mile on his way all the heath purples, browns, and greens had merged in a uniform dress without airiness or gradation, and broken only by touches of white where the little heaps of clean quartz sand showed the entrance to a rabbit-burrow, or where the white flints of a footpath lay like a thread over the slopes. In almost every one of the isolated and stunted thorns which grew here and there a night-hawk revealed his presence by whirring like the clack of a mill as long as he could hold his breath, then stopping, flapping his wings, wheeling round the bush, alighting, and after a silent interval of listening beginning to whirr again. At each brushing of Clym's feet white miller-moths flew into the air just high enough to catch upon their dusty wings the mellowed light from the west, which now shone across the depressions and levels of the ground without falling thereon to light them up.

Yeobright walked on amid this quiet scene with a hope that all would soon be well. At length he came to a spot where a soft perfume was wafted across his path, and he stood still for a moment to inhale the familiar scent. It was the place at which, four hours earlier, his mother had sat down exhausted on the knoll covered with shepherd's-thyme. While he stood a sound between a breathing and a moan suddenly reached his ears.

He looked to where the sound came from; but nothing appeared there save the verge of the hillock stretching against the sky in an unbroken line. He moved a few steps in that direction, and now he perceived a recumbent figure almost close at his feet.

Among the different possibilities as to the person's individuality there did not for a moment occur to Yeobright that it might be one of his own family. Sometimes furze-cutters had been known to sleep out of doors at these times, to save a long journey homeward and back again: but Clym remembered the moan and looked closer, and saw that the form was feminine: and a distress came over him like cold air from a cave. But he was not absolutely certain that the woman was his mother till he stopped and beheld her face, pallid, and with closed eyes.

His breath went, as it were, out of his body, and the cry of anguish which would have escaped him died upon his lips. During the momentary interval

that elapsed before he became conscious that something must be done all sense of time and place left him, and it seemed as if he and his mother were as when he was a child with her many years ago on this heath at hours similar to the present. Then he awoke to activity; and bending yet lower he found that she still breathed, and that her breath though feeble was regular, except when disturbed by an occasional gasp.

'O, what is it! Mother, are you very ill—you are not dying?' he cried, pressing his lips to her face. 'I am your Clym. How did you come here? What does it all mean?'

At that moment the chasm in their lives which his love for Eustacia had caused was not remembered by Yeobright, and to him the present joined continuously with that friendly past that had been their experience before the division.

She moved her lips, appeared to know him, but could not speak; and then Clym strove to consider how best to move her, as it would be necessary to get her away from the spot before the dewes were intense. He was able-bodied, and his mother was thin. He clasped his arms round her, lifted her a little, and said, 'Does that hurt you?'

She shook her head, and he lifted her up; then, at a slow pace, went onward with his load. The air was now completely cool; but whenever he passed over a sandy patch of ground uncarpeted with vegetation there was reflected from its surface into his face the heat which it had imbibed during the day. At the beginning of his undertaking he had thought but little of the distance which yet would have to be traversed before Blooms-End could be reached; but though he had slept that afternoon he soon began to feel the weight of his burden. Thus he proceeded, like Æneas with his father; the bats circling round his head, nightjars flapping their wings within a yard of his face, and not a human being within call.

While he was yet nearly a mile from the house his mother exhibited signs of restlessness under the constraint of being borne along, as if his arms were irksome to her. He lowered her upon his knees and looked around. The point they had now reached, though far from any road, was not more than a mile from the Blooms-End cottages occupied by Fairway, Sam, Humphrey, and the Cantles. Moreover, fifty yards off stood a hut, built of clods and covered with thin turves, but now entirely disused. The simple outline of the lonely shed was visible, and thither he determined to direct his steps. As soon as he arrived he laid her down carefully by the entrance, and then ran and cut with his pocket-knife an armful of the dryest fern. Spreading this within the shed, which was entirely open on one side, he placed his mother thereon: then he ran with all his might towards the dwelling of Fairway.

Nearly a quarter of an hour had passed, disturbed only by the broken breathing of the sufferer, when moving figures began to animate the line between heath and sky. In a few moments Clym arrived with Fairway, Humphrey, and Susan Nunsuch; Olly Dowden, who had chanced to be at Fairway's, Christian and Grandfer Cante following helter-skelter behind.

They had brought a lantern and matches, water, a pillow, and a few other articles which had occurred to their minds in the hurry of the moment. Sam had been despatched back again for brandy, and a boy brought Fairway's pony, upon which he rode off to the nearest medical man, with directions to call at Wildeve's on his way, and inform Thomasin that her aunt was unwell.

Sam and the brandy soon arrived, and it was administered by the light of the lantern; after which she became sufficiently conscious to signify by signs that something was wrong with her foot. Olly Dowden at length understood her meaning, and examined the foot indicated. It was swollen and red. Even as they watched the red began to assume a more livid colour, in the midst of which appeared a scarlet speck, smaller than a pea, and it was found to consist of a drop of blood, which rose above the smooth flesh of her ankle in a hemisphere.

'I know what it is,' cried Sam. 'She has been stung by an adder!'

'Yes,' said Clym instantly 'I remember when I was a child seeing just such a bite. O, my poor mother!'

'It was my father who was bit,' said Sam. 'And there's only one way to cure it. You must rub the place with the fat of other adders, and the only way to get that is by frying them. That's what they did for him.'

'Tis an old remedy,' said Clym distractedly, 'and I have doubts about it. But we can do nothing else till the doctor comes.'

'Tis a sure cure,' said Olly Dowden, with emphasis. 'I've used it when I used to go out nursing.'

'I will see what I can do,' said Sam.

He took a green hazel which he had used as a walking-stick, split it at the end, inserted a small pebble, and with the lantern in his hand went out into the heath. Clym had by this time lit a small fire, and despatched Susan Nunsuch for a frying-pan. Before she had returned Sam came in with three adders, one briskly coiling and uncoiling in the cleft of the stick, and the other two hanging dead across it.

'I have only been able to get one alive and fresh as he ought to be,' said Sam. 'These limp ones are two I killed to-day at work; but as they don't die till the sun goes down they can't be very stale meat.'

The live adder regarded the assembled group with a sinister look in its small black eye, and the beautiful brown and jet pattern on its back seemed to intensify with indignation. Mrs. Yeobright saw the creature, and the creature saw her: she quivered throughout, and averted her eyes.

'Look at that,' murmured Christian Cantle. 'Neighbours, how do we know but that something of the old serpent in God's garden, that gied the apple to the young woman with no clothes, lives on in adders and snakes still? Look at his eye—for all the world like a villainous sort of black currant. 'Tis to be hoped he can't ill-wish us! There's folks in heath who've been overlooked already. I will never kill another adder as long as I live.'

'Well, 'tis right to be afeard of things, if folks can't help it,' said Grandfer Cantle. 'Twould have saved me many a brave danger in my time.'

'I fancy I heard something outside the shed,' said Christian. 'I wish troubles would come in the daytime, for then a man could show his courage, and hardly beg for mercy of the most broomstick old woman he should see, if he was a brave man, and able to run out of her sight!'

'Even such an ignorant fellow as I should know better than do that,' said Sam.

'Well, there's calamities where we least expect it, whether or no. Neighbours, if Mrs. Yeobright were to die, d'ye think we should be took up and tried for the manslaughter of a woman?'

'No, they couldn't bring it in that,' said Sam, 'unless they could prove we had been poachers at some time of our lives. But she'll fetch round.'

'Now, if I had been stung by ten adders I should hardly have lost a day's work for't,' said Grandfer Cante. 'Such is my spirit when I am on my mettle. But perhaps 'tis natural in a man trained for war. Yes, I've gone through a good deal; but nothing ever came amiss to me after I joined the Locals in four.' He shook his head and smiled at a mental picture of himself in uniform. 'I was always first in the most gallianrest scrapes in my younger days!'

'I suppose that was because they always used to put the biggest fool afore,' said Fairway from the fire, beside which he knelt, blowing it with his breath.

'D'ye think so, Timothy?' said Grandfer Cante, coming forward to Fairway's side, with sudden depression in his face. 'Then a man may feel for years that he is good solid company, and be wrong about himself after all?'

'Never mind that question, Grandfer. Stir your stumps and get some more sticks. 'Tis very nonsense of an old man to prattle so when life and death's in mangling.'

'Yes, yes,' said Grandfer Cante, with melancholy conviction. 'Well, this is a bad night altogether for them that have done well in their time; and if I were ever such a dab at the hautboy or tenor-viol, I shouldn't have the heart to play tunes upon 'em now.'

Susan now arrived with the frying-pan, when the live adder was killed and the heads of the three taken off. The remainders, being cut into lengths and split open, were tossed into the pan, which began hissing and crackling over the fire. Soon a rill of clear oil trickled from the carcasses, whereupon Clym dipped the corner of his handkerchief into the liquid and anointed the wound.

VIII. EUSTACIA HEARS OF GOOD FORTUNE AND BEHOLDS EVIL

IN the meantime Eustacia, left alone in her cottage at Alderworth, had become considerably depressed by the posture of affairs. The consequences which might result from Clym's discovery that his mother had been turned from his door that day were likely to be disagreeable, and this was a quality in events which she hated as much as the dreadful.

To be left to pass the evening by herself was irksome to her at any time, and this evening it was more irksome than usual by reason of the excitements of the past hours. The two visits had stirred her into restlessness. She was not wrought to any great pitch of uneasiness by the probability of appearing in an ill light in the discussion between Clym and his mother, but she was wrought to vexation; and her slumbering activities were quickened to the extent of wishing that she had opened the door. She had certainly believed that Clym was awake, and the excuse would be an honest one as far as it went; but nothing could save her from censure in refusing to answer at the first knock. Yet, instead of blaming herself for the issue she laid the fault upon the shoulders of some indistinct, colossal Prince of the World, who had framed her situation and ruled her lot.

At this time of the year it was pleasanter to walk by night than by day, and when Clym had been absent about an hour she suddenly resolved to go out in the direction of Blooms-End, on the chance of meeting him on his return. When she reached the garden gate she heard wheels approaching, and looking round beheld her grandfather coming up in his car.

'I can't stay a minute, thank ye,' he answered to her greeting. 'I am driving to East Egdon; but I came round here just to tell you the news. Perhaps you have heard—about Mr. Wildeve's fortune?'

'No,' said Eustacia blankly.

'Well, he has come into a fortune of eleven thousand pounds—uncle died in Canada, just after hearing that all his family, whom he was sending home, had gone to the bottom in the *Cassiopeia*; so Wildeve has come into everything, without in the least expecting it.'

Eustacia stood motionless awhile. 'How long has he known of this?' she asked.

'Well, it was known to him this morning early, for I knew it at ten o'clock, when Charley came back. Now, he is what I call a lucky man. What a fool you were, Eustacial!'

'In what way?' she said, lifting her eyes in apparent calmness.

'Why, in not sticking to him when you had him.'

'Had him, indeed!'

'I did not know there had ever been anything between you till lately; and, faith, I should have been hot and strong against it if I had known; but since it seems that there was some sniffing between ye, why the deuce didn't you stick to him?'

Eustacia made no reply, but she looked as if she could say as much upon that subject as he if she chose.

'And how is your poor purblind husband?' continued the old man. 'Not a bad fellow either, as far as he goes.'

'He is quite well.'

'It is a good thing for his cousin what-d'ye-call-her? By George, you ought to have been in that galley, my girl! Now I must drive on. Do you want any assistance? What's mine is yours, you know.'

'Thank you, grandfather, we are not in want at present,' she said coldly. 'Clym cuts furze, but he does it mostly as a useful pastime, because he can do nothing else.'

'He is paid for his pastime, isn't he? Three shillings a hundred, I heard.'

'Clym has money,' she said, colouring: 'but he likes to earn a little.'

'Very well; good night.' And the captain drove on.

When her grandfather was gone Eustacia went on her way mechanically; but her thoughts were no longer concerning her mother-in-law and Clym. Wildevé, notwithstanding his complaints against his fate, had been seized upon by destiny and placed in the sunshine once more. Eleven thousand pounds! From every Egdon point of view he was a rich man. In Eustacia's eyes, too, it was ample sum—one sufficient to supply those wants of hers which had been stigmatized by Clym in his more austere moods as vain and luxurious. Though she was no lover of money she loved what money could bring; and the new accessories she imagined around him clothed Wildevé with a great deal of interest. She recollected now how quietly well-dressed he had been that morning: he had probably put on his newest suit, regardless of damage by briars and thorns. And then she thought of his manner towards herself.

'O I see it, I see it,' she said. 'How much he wishes he had me now, that he might give me all I desire!'

In recalling the details of his glances and words—at the time scarcely regarded—it became plain to her how greatly they had been dictated by his knowledge of this new event. 'Had he been a man to bear a jolt ill-will he would have told me of his good fortune in crowing tones; instead of doing that he mentioned not a word, in deference to my misfortunes, and merely implied that he loved me still, as one superior to him.'

Wildevé's silence that day on what had happened to him was just the kind of behaviour calculated to make an impression on such a woman. Those delicate touches of good taste were, in fact, one of the strong points in his demeanour towards the other sex. The peculiarity of Wildevé was that, while at one time passionate, upbraiding, and resentful towards a woman, at another he would treat her with such unparalleled grace as to make previous neglect appear as no discourtesy, injury as no insult, interference as a delicate attention, and the ruin of her honour as excess of chivalry. This man, whose admiration to-day Eustacia had disregarded, whose good wishes she had scarcely taken the trouble to accept, whom she had shown out of the house by the back door, was the possessor of eleven thousand pounds—a man of fair professional education, and one who had served his articles with a civil engineer.

So intent was Eustacia upon Wildevé's fortunes that she forgot how much closer to her own course were those of Clym; and instead of walking on to meet him at once she sat down upon a stone. She was disturbed in her reverie by a voice behind, and turning her head beheld the old lover and fortunate inheritor of wealth immediately beside her.

She remained sitting, though the fluctuation in her look might have told any man who knew her so well as Wildeve that she was thinking of him.

'How did you come here?' she said in her clear, low tone. 'I thought you were at home.'

'I went on to the village after leaving your garden; and now I have come back again: that's all. Which way are you walking, may I ask?'

She waved her hand in the direction of Blooms-End. 'I am going to meet my husband. I think I may possibly have got into trouble whilst you were with me to-day.'

'How could that be?'

'By not letting in Mrs. Yeobright.'

'I hope that visit of mine did you no harm.'

'None. It was not your fault,' she said quietly.

By this time she had risen; and they involuntarily sauntered on together, without speaking, for two or three minutes; when Eustacia broke silence by saying, 'I assume I must congratulate you.'

'On what? O yes; on my eleven thousand pounds, you mean. Well, since I didn't get something else, I must be content with getting that.'

'You seem very indifferent about it. Why didn't you tell me to-day when you came?' she said in the tone of a neglected person. 'I heard of it quite by accident.'

'I did mean to tell you,' said Wildeve. 'But I—well, I will speak frankly—I did not like to mention it when I saw, Eustacia, that your star was not high. The sight of a man lying wearied out with hard work, as your husband lay, made me feel that to brag of my own fortune to you would be greatly out of place. Yet, as you stood there beside him, I could not help feeling too that in many respects he was a richer man than I.'

At this Eustacia said, with slumbering mischievousness, 'What would you exchange with him—your fortune for me?'

'I certainly would,' said Wildeve.

'As we are imagining what is impossible and absurd, suppose we change the subject?'

'Very well; and I will tell you of my plans for the future, if you care to hear them. I shall permanently invest nine thousand pounds, keep one thousand as ready money, and with the remaining thousand travel for a year or so.'

'Travel? What a bright idea! Where will you go to?'

'From here to Paris, where I shall pass the winter and spring. Then I shall go to Italy, Greece, Egypt, and Palestine, before the hot weather comes on. In the summer I shall go to America; and then, by a plan not yet settled, I shall go to Australia and round to India. By that time I shall have begun to have had enough of it. Then I shall probably come back to Paris again, and there I shall stay as long as I can afford to.'

'Back to Paris again,' she murmured in a voice that was nearly a sigh. She had never once told Wildeve of the Parisian desires which Clym's description

had sown in her; yet here was he involuntarily in a position to gratify them. 'You think a good deal of Paris?' she added.

'Yes. In my opinion it is the central beauty-spot of the world.'

'And in mine! And Thomasin will go with you?'

'Yes, if she cares to. She may prefer to stay at home.'

'So you will be going about, and I shall be staying here!'

'I suppose you will. But we know whose fault that is.'

'I am not blaming you,' she said quickly.

'Oh, I thought you were. If ever you *should* be inclined to blame me, think of a certain evening by Rainbarrow, when you promised to meet me and did not. You sent me a letter; and my heart ached to read that as I hope yours never will. That was one point of divergence. I then did something in haste. . . . But she is a good woman, and I will say no more.'

'I know that the blame was on my side that time,' said Eustacia. 'But it had not always been so. However, it is my misfortune to be too sudden in feeling. O Damon, don't reproach me any more—I can't bear that.'

They went on silently for a distance of a mile and more, when Eustacia said suddenly, 'Haven't you come out of your way, Mr. Wildeve?'

'My way is anywhere to-night. I will go with you as far as the hill on which we can see Blooms-End, as it is getting late for you to be alone.'

'Don't trouble. I am not obliged to be out at all. I think I would rather you did not accompany me further. This sort of thing would have an odd look if known.'

'Very well, I will leave you.' He took her hand unexpectedly, and kissed it—for the first time since her marriage. 'What light is that on the hill?' he added, as it were to hide the caress.

She looked, and saw a flickering firelight proceeding from the open side of a hovel a little way before them. The hovel, which she had hitherto always found empty, seemed to be inhabited now.

'Since you have come so far,' said Eustacia, 'will you see me safely past that hut? I thought I should have met Clym somewhere about here, but as he doesn't appear I will hasten on and get to Blooms-End before he leaves.'

They advanced to the turf-shed, and when they got near it the firelight and the lantern inside showed distinctly enough the form of a woman reclining on a bed of fern, a group of heath men and women standing around her. Eustacia did not recognize Mrs. Yeobright in the reclining figure, nor Clym as one of the standers-by till she came close. Then she quickly pressed her hand upon Wildeve's arm and signified to him to come back from the open side of the shed into the shadow.

'It is my husband and his mother,' she whispered in an agitated voice. 'What can it mean? Will you step forward and tell me?'

Wildeve left her side and went to the back wall of the hut. Presently Eustacia perceived that he was beckoning to her, and she advanced and joined him.

'It is a serious case,' said Wildeve.

From their position they could hear what was proceeding inside.

'I cannot think where she could have been going,' said Clym to some one. 'She had evidently walked a long way, but even when she was able to speak just now she would not tell me where. What do you really think of her?'

'There is a great deal to fear,' was gravely answered, in a voice which Eustacia recognized as that of the only surgeon in the district. 'She has suffered somewhat from the bite of the adder; but it is exhaustion which has overpowered her. My impression is that her walk must have been exceptionally long.'

'I used to tell her not to overwork herself this weather,' said Clym, with distress. 'Do you think we did well in using the adder's fat?'

'Well, it is a very ancient remedy—the old remedy of the viper-catchers, I believe,' replied the doctor. 'It is mentioned as an infallible ointment by Hoffman, Mead, and I think the Abbé Fontana. Undoubtedly it was as good a thing as you could do; though I question if some other oils would not have been equally efficacious.'

'Come here, come here!' was then rapidly said in soft female tones; and Clym and the doctor could be heard rushing forward from the back part of the shed, where they had been standing.

'O, what is it?' whispered Eustacia.

''Twas Thomasin who spoke,' said Wildev. 'Then they have fetched her. I wonder if I had better go in—yet it might do harm.'

For a long time there was utter silence among the group within; and it was broken at last by Clym saying, in an agonized voice, 'O doctor, what does it mean?'

The doctor did not reply at once; ultimately he said, 'She is sinking fast. Her heart was previously affected, and physical exhaustion has dealt the finishing blow.'

Then there was a weeping of women, then waiting, then hushed exclamations, then a strange gasping sound, then a painful stillness.

'It is all over,' said the doctor.

Further back in the hut the cotters whispered, 'Mrs. Yeobright is dead.'

Almost at the same moment the two watchers observed the form of a small old-fashioned child entering at the open side of the shed. Susan Nunsuch, whose boy it was, went forward to the opening and silently beckoned him to go back.

'I've got something to tell 'ee, mother,' he cried in a shrill tone. 'That woman asleep there walked along with me to-day; and she said I was to say that I had seed her, and she was a broken-hearted woman and cast off by her son, and then I came on home.'

A confused sob as from a man was heard within, upon which Eustacia gasped faintly, 'That's Clym—I must go to him—yet dare I do it? No: come away!'

When they had withdrawn from the neighbourhood of the shed she said huskily, 'I am to blame for this. There is evil in store for me.'

'Was she not admitted to your house after all?' Wildeva inquired.

'No; and that's where it all lies! O, what shall I do! I shall not intrude upon them: I shall go straight home. Damon, good-bye! I cannot speak to you any more now.'

They parted company; and when Eustacia had reached the next hill she looked back. A melancholy procession was wending its way by the light of the lantern from the hut towards Blooms-End. Wildeva was nowhere to be seen.

BOOK FIVE: THE DISCOVERY

I. 'WHEREFORE IS LIGHT GIVEN TO HIM THAT IS IN MISERY?'

ONE evening, about three weeks after the funeral of Mrs. Yeobright, when the silver face of the moon sent a bundle of beams directly upon the floor of Clym's house at Alderworth, a woman came forth from within. She reclined over the garden gate as if to refresh herself awhile. The pale lunar touches which make beauties of hags lent divinity to this face, already beautiful.

She had not long been there when a man came up the road and with some hesitation said to her, 'How is he to-night, ma'am, if you please?'

'He is better, though still very unwell, Humphrey,' replied Eustacia.

'Is he light-headed, ma'am?'

'No. He is quite sensible now.'

'Do he rave about his mother just the same, poor fellow?' continued Humphrey.

'Just as much, though not quite so wildly,' she said in a low voice.

'It was very unfortunate, ma'am, that the boy Johnny should ever ha' told his mother's dying words, about her being broken-hearted and cast off by her son. 'Twas enough to upset any man alive.'

Eustacia made no reply beyond that of a slight catch in her breath, as of one who fain would speak but could not; and Humphrey, finding that she was disinclined to say more, went home again.

Eustacia turned, entered the house, and ascended to the front bedroom, where a shaded light was burning. In the bed lay Clym, pale, haggard, wide awake, tossing to one side and to the other, his eyes lit by a hot light, as if the fire in their pupils were burning up their substance.

'Is it you, Eustacia?' he said as she sat down.

'Yes, Clym. I have been down to the gate. The moon is shining beautifully, and there is not a leaf stirring.'

'Shining, is it? What's the moon to a man like me? Let it shine—let anything be, so that I never see another day! . . . Eustacia, I don't know where to look: my thoughts go through me like swords. O, if any man wants to make himself immortal by painting a picture of wretchedness, let him come here!'

'Why do you say so?'

'I cannot help feeling that I did my best to kill her.'

'No, Clym.'

'Yes, it was so; it is useless to excuse me! My conduct to her was too hideous—I made no advances; and she could not bring herself to forgive me.'

Now she is dead! If I had only shown myself willing to make it up with her sooner, and we had been friends, and then she had died, it wouldn't be so hard to bear. But I never went near her house, so she never came near mine, and didn't know how welcome she would have been—that's what troubles me. She did not know I was going to her house that very night, for she was too insensible to understand me. If she had only come to see me! I longed that she would. But it was not to be.'

There escaped from Eustacia one of those shivering sighs which used to shake her like a pestilent blast. She had not yet told.

But Yeobright was too deeply absorbed in the ramblings incidental to his remorseful state to notice her. During his illness he had been continually talking thus. Despair had been added to his original grief by the unfortunate disclosure of the boy who had received the last words of Mrs. Yeobright—words too bitterly uttered in an hour of misapprehension. Then his distress had overwhelmed him, and he longed for death as a field labourer longs for the shade. It was the pitiful sight of a man standing in the very focus of sorrow. He continually bewailed his tardy journey to his mother's house, because it was an error which could never be rectified, and insisted that he must have been horribly perverted by some fiend not to have thought before that it was his duty to go to her, since she did not come to him. He would ask Eustacia to agree with him in his self-condemnation; and when she, seared inwardly by a secret she dared not tell, declared that she could not give an opinion, he would say, 'That's because you didn't know my mother's nature. She was always ready to forgive if asked to do so; but I seemed to her to be as an obstinate child, and that made her unyielding. Yet not unyielding: she was proud, and reserved, no more. . . . Yes, I can understand why she held out against me so long. She was waiting for me. I dare say she said a hundred times in her sorrow, "What a return he makes for all the sacrifices I have made for him!" I never went to her! When I set out to visit her it was too late. To think of that is nearly intolerable!'

Sometimes his condition had been one of utter remorse, unsoftened by a single tear of pure sorrow: and then he writhed as he lay, fevered far more by thought than by physical ills. 'If I could only get one assurance that she did not die in a belief that I was resentful,' he said one day when in this mood, 'it would be better to think of than a hope of heaven. But that I cannot do.'

'You give yourself up too much to this wearying despair,' said Eustacia. 'Other men's mothers have died.'

'That doesn't make the loss of mine less. Yet it is less the loss than the circumstances of the loss. I sinned against her, and on that account there is no light for me.'

'She sinned against you, I think.'

'No: she did not. I committed the guilt; and may the whole burden be upon my head!'

'I think you might consider twice before you say that,' Eustacia replied.

'Single men have, no doubt, a right to curse themselves as much as they please; but men with wives involve two in the doom they pray down.'

'I am in too sorry a state to understand what you are refining on,' said the wretched man. 'Day and night shout at me, "You have helped to kill her." But in loathing myself I may, I own, be unjust to you, my poor wife. Forgive me for it, Eustacia, for I scarcely know what I do.'

Eustacia was always anxious to avoid the sight of her husband in such a state as this, which had become as dreadful to her as the trial scene was to Judas Iscariot. It brought before her eyes the spectre of a worn-out woman knocking at a door which she would not open; and she shrank from contemplating it. Yet it was better for Yeobright himself when he spoke openly of his sharp regret, for in silence he endured infinitely more, and would sometimes remain so long in a tense, brooding mood, consuming himself by the gnawing of his thought, that it was imperatively necessary to make him talk aloud, that his grief might in some degree expend itself in the effort.

Eustacia had not been long indoors after her look at the moonlight when a soft footstep came up to the house, and Thomasin was announced by the woman downstairs.

'Ah, Thomasin! Thank you for coming to-night,' said Clym when she entered the room. 'Here am I, you see. Such a wretched spectacle am I, that I shrink from being seen by a single friend, and almost from you.'

'You must not shrink from me, dear Clym,' said Thomasin earnestly, in that sweet voice of hers which came to a sufferer like fresh air into a Black Hole. 'Nothing in you can ever shock me or drive me away. I have been here before, but you don't remember it.'

'Yes, I do; I am not delirious, Thomasin, nor have I been so at all. Don't you believe that if they say so. I am only in great misery at what I have done: and that, with the weakness, makes me seem mad. But it has not upset my reason. Do you think I should remember all about my mother's death if I were out of my mind? No such good luck. Two months and a half, Thomasin, the last of her life, did my poor mother live alone, distracted and mourning because of me; yet she was unvisited by me, though I was living only five miles off. Two months and a half—seventy-five days did the sun rise and set upon her in that deserted state which a dog didn't deserve! Poor people who had nothing in common with her would have cared for her, and visited her had they known her sickness and loneliness; but I, who should have been all to her, stayed away like a cur. If there is any justice in God let Him kill me now. He has nearly blinded me, but that is not enough. If He would only strike me with more pain I would believe in Him for ever!'

'Hush, hush! O, pray, Clym, don't, don't say it!' implored Thomasin, affrighted into sobs and tears; while Eustacia, at the other side of the room, though her pale face remained calm, writhed in her chair. Clym went on without heeding his cousin.

'But I am not worth receiving further proof even of Heaven's reprobation. Do you think, Thomasin, that she knew me—that she did not die in that

horrid mistaken notion about my not forgiving her, which I can't tell you how she acquired? If you could only assure me of that! Do you think so, Eustacia? Do speak to me.'

'I think I can assure you that she knew better at last,' said Thomasin. The pallid Eustacia said nothing.

'Why didn't she come to my house? I would have taken her in and showed her how I loved her in spite of all. But she never came; and I didn't go to her, and she died on the heath like an animal kicked out, nobody to help her till it was too late. If you could have seen her, Thomasin, as I saw her—a poor dying woman, lying in the dark upon the bare ground, moaning, nobody near, believing she was utterly deserted by all the world, it would have moved you to anguish, it would have moved a brute. And this poor woman my mother! No wonder she said to the child, "You have seen a broken-hearted woman." What a state she must have been brought to, to say that! and who can have done it but I? It is too dreadful to think of, and I wish I could be punished more heavily than I am. How long was I what they called out of my senses?'

'A week, I think.'

'And then I became calm.'

'Yes, for four days.'

'And now I have left off being calm.'

'But try to be quiet: please do, and you will soon be strong. If you could remove that impression from your mind——'

'Yes, yes,' he said impatiently. 'But I don't want to get strong. What's the use of getting well? It would be better for me if I die, and it would certainly be better for Eustacia. Is Eustacia there?'

'Yes.'

'It would be better for you, Eustacia, if I were to die?'

'Don't press such a question, dear Clym.'

'Well, it really is but a shadowy supposition; for unfortunately I am going to live. I feel myself getting better. Thomasin, how long are you going to stay at the inn, now that all this money has come to your husband?'

'Another month or two, probably; until my illness is over. We cannot get off till then. I think it will be a month or more.'

'Yes, yes. Of course. Ah, Cousin Tamsie, you will get over your trouble—one little month will take you through it, and bring something to console you; but I shall never get over mine, and no consolation will come!'

'Clym, you are unjust to yourself. Depend upon it, aunt thought kindly of you. I know that, if she had lived, you would have been reconciled with her.'

'But she didn't come to see me, though I asked her, before I married, if she would come. Had she come, or had I gone there, she would never have died saying, "I am a broken-hearted woman, cast off by my son." My door has always been open to her—a welcome here has always awaited her. But that she never came to see.'

'You had better not talk any more now, Clym,' said Eustacia faintly, from the other part of the room, for the scene was growing intolerable to her.

'Let me talk to you instead for the little time I shall be here,' Thomasin said soothingly. 'Consider what a one-sided way you have of looking at the matter, Clym. When she said that to the little boy you had not found her and taken her into your arms; and it might have been uttered in a moment of bitterness. It was rather like aunt to say things in haste. She sometimes used to speak so to me. Though she did not come I am convinced that she thought of coming to see you. Do you suppose a man's mother could live two or three months without one forgiving thought? She forgave me; and why should she not have forgiven you?'

'You laboured to win her round; I did nothing. I, who was going to teach people the higher secrets of happiness, did not know how to keep out of that gross misery which the most untaught are wise enough to avoid.'

'How did you get here to-night, Thomasin?' said Eustacia.

'Damon set me down at the end of the lane. He has driven into the village on business, and he will come and pick me up by-and-by.'

Accordingly they soon after heard the noise of wheels. Wildeve had come, and was waiting outside with his horse and gig.

'Send out and tell him I will be down in two minutes,' said Thomasin.

'I will run down myself,' said Eustacia.

She went down. Wildeve had alighted, and was standing before the horse's head when Eustacia opened the door. He did not turn for a moment, thinking the comer Thomasin. Then he looked, started ever so little, and said one word: 'Well?'

'I have not yet told him,' she replied in a whisper.

'Then don't do so till he is well—it will be fatal. You are ill yourself.'

'I am wretched. . . . O Damon,' she said, bursting into tears, 'I—I can't tell you how unhappy I am! I can hardly bear this. I can tell nobody of my trouble—nobody knows of it but you.'

'Poor girl!' said Wildeve, visibly affected at her distress, and at last led on so far as to take her hand. 'It is hard, when you have done nothing to deserve it, that you should have got involved in such a web as this. You were not made for these sad scenes. I am to blame most. If I could only have saved you from it all!'

'But, Damon, please pray tell me what I must do? To sit by him hour after hour, and hear him reproach himself as being the cause of her death, and to know that I am the sinner, if any human being is at all, drives me into cold despair. I don't know what to do. Should I tell him or should I not tell him? I always am asking myself that. O, I want to tell him; and yet I am afraid. If he finds it out he must surely kill me, for nothing else will be in proportion to his feelings now. "Beware the fury of a patient man" sounds day by day in my ears as I watch him.'

'Well, wait till he is better, and trust to chance. And when you tell, you must only tell part—for his own sake.'

'Which part should I keep back?'

Wildeve paused. 'That I was in the house at the time,' he said in a low tone.

'Yes; it must be concealed, seeing what has been whispered. How much easier are hasty actions than speeches that will excuse them!'

'If he were only to die——' Wildeve murmured.

'Do not think of it! I would not buy hope of immunity by so cowardly a desire even if I hated him. Now I am going up to him again. Thomasin bade me tell you she would be down in a few minutes. Good-bye.'

She returned, and Thomasin soon appeared. When she was seated in the gig with her husband, and the horse was turning to go off, Wildeve lifted his eyes to the bedroom windows. Looking from one of them he could discern a pale, tragic face watching him drive away. It was Eustacia's.

II. A LURID LIGHT BREAKS IN UPON A DARKENED UNDERSTANDING

CLYM's grief became mitigated by wearing itself out. His strength returned, and a month after the visit of Thomasin he might have been seen walking about the garden. Endurance and despair, equanimity and gloom, the tints of health and the pallor of death, mingled weirdly in his face. He was not unnaturally silent upon all of the past that related to his mother; and though Eustacia knew that he was thinking of it none the less, she was only too glad to escape the topic ever to bring it up anew. When his mind had been weaker his heart had led him to speak out; but reason having now somewhat recovered itself he sank into taciturnity.

One evening when he was thus standing in the garden, abstractedly spudding up a weed with his stick, a bony figure turned the corner of the house and came up to him.

'Christian, isn't it?' said Clym. 'I am glad you have found me out. I shall soon want you to go to Blooms-End and assist me in putting the house in order. I suppose it is all locked up as I left it?'

'Yes, Mister Clym.'

'Have you dug up the potatoes and other roots?'

'Yes, without a drop o' rain, thank God. But I was coming to tell 'ee of something else which is quite different from what we have lately had in the family. I be sent by the rich gentleman at the Woman, that we used to call the landlord, to tell 'ee that Mrs. Wildeve is doing well of a girl, which was born punctually at one o'clock at noon, or a few minutes more or less; and 'tis said that expecting of this increase is what have kept 'em there since they came into their money.'

'And she is getting on well, you say?'

'Yes, sir. Only Mr. Wildeve is twanky because 't isn't a boy—that's what they say in the kitchen, but I was not supposed to notice that.'

'Christian, now listen to me.'

'Yes, sure, Mr. Yeobright.'

'Did you see my mother the day before she died?'

'No, I did not.'

Yeobright's face expressed disappointment.

'But I zeed her the morning of the same day she died.'

Clym's look lighted up. 'That's nearer still to my meaning,' he said.

'Yes, I know 'twas the same day; for she said, "I be going to see him, Christian; so I shall not want any vegetables brought in for dinner."'

'See whom?'

'See you. She was going to your house, you understand.'

Yeobright regarded Christian with intense surprise. 'Why did you never mention this?' he said. 'Are you sure it was my house she was coming to?'

'O yes. I didn't mention it because I've never zeed you lately. And as she didn't get there it was all nought, and nothing to tell.'

'And I have been wondering why she should have walked in the heath on that hot day! Well, did she say what she was coming for? It is a thing, Christian, I am very anxious to know.'

'Yes, Mister Clym. She didn't say it to me, though I think she did to one here and there.'

'Do you know one person to whom she spoke of it?'

'There is one man, please, sir, but I hope you won't mention my name to him, as I have seen him in strange places, particular in dreams. One night last summer he glared at me like Famine and Sword, and it made me feel so low that I didn't comb out my few hairs for two days. He was standing, as it might be, Mister Yeobright, in the middle of the path to Mistover, and your mother came up, looking as pale—'

'Yes, when was that?'

'Last summer, in my dream.'

'Pooh! Who's the man?'

'Diggory, the reddleman. He called upon her and sat with her the evening before she set out to see you. I hadn't gone home from work when he came up to the gate.'

'I must see Venn—I wish I had known it before,' said Clym anxiously. 'I wonder why he has not come to tell me?'

'He went out of Egdon Heath the next day, so would not be likely to know you wanted him.'

'Christian,' said Clym, 'you must go and find Venn. I am otherwise engaged, or I would go myself. Find him at once, and tell him I want to speak to him.'

'I am a good hand at hunting up folk by day,' said Christian, looking dubiously round at the declining light; 'but as to night-time, never is such a bad hand as I, Mister Yeobright.'

'Search the heath when you will, so that you bring him soon. Bring him to-morrow, if you can.'

Christian then departed. The morrow came, but no Venn. In the evening Christian arrived, looking very weary. He had been searching all day, and had heard nothing of the reddleman.

'Inquire as much as you can to-morrow without neglecting your work,' said Yeobright. 'Don't come again till you have found him.'

The next day Yeobright set out for the old house at Blooms-End, which, with the garden, was now his own. His severe illness had hindered all preparations for his removal thither; but it had become necessary that he should go and overlook its contents, as administrator to his mother's little property; for which purpose he decided to pass the next night on the premises.

He journeyed onward, not quickly or decisively, but in the slow walk of one who has been awakened from a stupefying sleep. It was early afternoon when he reached the valley. The expression of the place, the tone of the hour, were precisely those of many such occasions in days gone by; and these antecedent similarities fostered the illusion that she, who was there no longer, would come out to welcome him. The garden gate was locked and the shutters were closed, just as he himself had left them on the evening after the funeral. He unlocked the gate, and found that a spider had already constructed a large web, tying the door to the lintel, on the supposition that it was never to be opened again. When he had entered the house and flung back the shutters he set about his task of overhauling the cupboards and closets, burning papers, and considering how best to arrange the place for Eustacia's reception, until such time as he might be in a position to carry out his long-delayed scheme, should that time ever arrive.

As he surveyed the rooms he felt strongly disinclined for the alterations which would have to be made in the time-honoured furnishing of his parents and grandparents, to suit Eustacia's modern ideas. The gaunt oak-cased clock, with the picture of the Ascension on the door-panel and the Miraculous Draught of Fishes on the base; his grandmother's corner cupboard with the glass door, through which the spotted china was visible; the dumb-waiter; the wooden tea-trays; the hanging fountain with the brass tap—whither would these venerable articles have to be banished?

He noticed that the flowers in the window had died for want of water, and he placed them out upon the ledge, that they might be taken away. While thus engaged he heard footsteps on the gravel without, and somebody knocked at the door.

Yeobright opened it, and Venn was standing before him.

'Good morning,' said the reddleman. 'Is Mrs. Yeobright at home?'

Yeobright looked upon the ground. 'Then you have not seen Christian or any of the Egdon folks?' he said.

'No. I have only just returned after a long stay away. I called here the day before I left.'

'And you have heard nothing?'

'Nothing.'

'My mother is—dead.'

'Dead!' said Venn mechanically.

'Her home now is where I shouldn't mind having mine.'

Venn regarded him, and then said, 'If I didn't see your face I could never believe your words. Have you been ill?'

'I had an illness.'

'Well, the change! When I parted from her a month ago everything seemed to say that she was going to begin a new life.'

'And what seemed came true.'

'You say right, no doubt. Trouble has taught you a deeper vein of talk than mine. All I meant was regarding her life here. She has died too soon.'

'Perhaps through my living too long. I have had a bitter experience on that score this last month, Diggory. But come in; I have been wanting to see you.'

He conducted the reddleman into the large room where the dancing had taken place the previous Christmas; and they sat down in the settle together. 'There's the cold fireplace, you see,' said Clym. 'When that half-burnt log and those cinders were alight she was alive! Little has been changed here yet. I can do nothing. My life creeps like a snail.'

'How came she to die?' said Venn.

Yeobright gave him some particulars of her illness and death, and continued: 'After this no kind of pain will ever seem more than an indisposition to me.—I began saying that I wanted to ask you something, but I stray from subjects like a drunken man. I am anxious to know what my mother said to you when she last saw you. You talked with her a long time, I think?'

'I talked with her more than half an hour.'

'About me?'

'Yes. And it must have been on account of what we said that she was on the heath. Without question she was coming to see you.'

'But why should she come to see me if she felt so bitterly against me? There's the mystery.'

'Yet I know she quite forgave 'ee.'

'But, Diggory—would a woman, who had quite forgiven her son, say, when she felt herself ill on the way to the house, that she was broken-hearted because of his ill-usage? Never!'

'What I know is, that she didn't blame you at all. She blamed herself for what had happened, and only herself. I had it from her own lips.'

'You had it from her lips that I had *not* ill-treated her; and at the same time another had it from her lips that I *had* ill-treated her? My mother was no impulsive woman who changed her opinion every hour without reason. How can it be, Venn, that she should have told such different stories in close succession?'

'I cannot say. It is certainly odd, when she had forgiven you, and forgiven your wife, and was going to see ye on purpose to make friends.'

'If there was one thing wanting to bewilder me it was this incomprehensible thing! . . . Diggory, if we, who remain alive, were only allowed to hold conversation with the dead—just once, a bare minute, even through a screen of iron bars, as with persons in prison—what we might learn! How many who now ride smiling would hide their heads! And this mystery—I should then be at the bottom of it at once. But the grave has for ever shut her in; and how shall it be found out now?'

No reply was returned by his companion, since none could be given; and when Venn left, a few minutes later, Clym had passed from the dulness of sorrow to the fluctuation of carking incertitude.

He continued in the same state all the afternoon. A bed was made up for him in the same house by a neighbour, that he might not have to return again the next day; and when he retired to rest in the deserted place it was only to remain awake hour after hour thinking the same thoughts. How to discover a solution to this riddle of death seemed a query of more importance than highest problems of the living. There was housed in his memory a vivid picture of the face of a little boy as he entered the hovel where Clym's mother lay. The round eyes, eager gaze, the piping voice which enunciated the words, had operated like stilettoes on his brain.

A visit to the boy suggested itself as a means of gleaning new particulars; though it might be quite unproductive. To probe a child's mind after the lapse of six weeks, not for facts which the child had seen and understood, but to get at those which were in their nature beyond him, did not promise much; yet when every obvious channel is blocked we grope towards the small and obscure. There was nothing else left to do; after that he would allow the enigma to drop into the abyss of undiscoverable things.

It was about daybreak when he had reached this decision, and he at once arose. He locked up the house and went out in the green patch which merged in heather further on. In front of the white garden-palings the path branched into three like a broad-arrow. The road to the right led to the Quiet Woman and its neighbourhood; the middle track led to Mistover Knap; the left-hand track led over the hill to another part of Mistover, where the child lived. On inclining into the latter path Yeobright felt a creeping chilliness, familiar enough to most people, and probably caused by the unsunned morning air. In after days he thought of it as a thing of singular significance.

When Yeobright reached the cottage of Susan Nunsuch, the mother of the boy he sought, he found that the inmates were not yet astir. But in upland hamlets the transition from a-bed to abroad is surprisingly swift and easy. There no dense partition of yawns and toilets divides humanity by night from humanity by day. Yeobright tapped at the upper window-sill, which he could reach with his walking-stick; and in three or four minutes the woman came down.

It was not till this moment that Clym recollected her to be the person who had behaved so barbarously to Eustacia. It partly explained the insuavity with which the woman greeted him. Moreover, the boy had been ailing again; and

Susan now, as ever since the night when he had been pressed into Eustacia's service at the bonfire, attributed his indispositions to Eustacia's influence as a witch. It was one of those sentiments which lurk like moles underneath the visible surface of manners, and may have been kept alive by Eustacia's entreaty to the captain, at the time that he had intended to prosecute Susan for the pricking in church, to let the matter drop; which he accordingly had done.

Yeobright overcame his repugnance, for Susan had at least borne his mother no ill-will. He asked kindly for the boy; but her manner did not improve.

'I wish to see him,' continued Yeobright, with some hesitation; 'to ask him if he remembers anything more of his walk with my mother than what he has previously told.'

She regarded him in a peculiar and criticizing manner. To anybody but a half-blind man it would have said, 'You want another of the knocks which have already laid you so low.'

She called the boy downstairs, asked Clym to sit down on a stool, and continued, 'Now, Johnny, tell Mr. Yeobright anything you can call to mind.'

'You have not forgotten how you walked with the poor lady on that hot day?' said Clym.

'No,' said the boy.

'And what she said to you?'

The boy repeated the exact words he had used on entering the hut. Yeobright rested his elbow on the table and shaded his face with his hand; and the mother looked as if she wondered how a man could want more of what had stung him so deeply.

'She was going to Alderworth when you first met her?'

'No; she was coming away.'

'That can't be.'

'Yes; she walked along with me. I was coming away, too.'

'Then where did you first see her?'

'At your house.'

'Attend, and speak the truth!' said Clym sternly.

'Yes, sir; at your house was where I seed her first.'

Clym started up, and Susan smiled in an expectant way, which did not embellish her face; it seemed to mean, 'Something sinister is coming!'

'What did she do at my house?'

'She went and sat under the trees at the Devil's Bellows.'

'Good God! this is all news to me!'

'You never told me this before?' said Susan.

'No, mother; because I didn't like to tell 'e I had been so far. I was picking black-hearts, and they don't grow nearer.'

'What did she do then?' said Yeobright.

'Looked at a man who came up and went into your house.'

'That was myself—a furze-cutter, with brambles in his hand.'

'No; 'twas not you. 'Twas a gentleman. You had gone in afore.'

'Who was he?'

'I don't know.'

'Now tell me what happened next.'

'The poor lady went and knocked at your door, and the lady with black hair looked out of the side-window at her.'

The boy's mother turned to Clym and said, 'This is something you didn't expect?'

Yeobright took no more notice of her than if he had been of stone. 'Go on, go on,' he said hoarsely to the boy.

'And when she saw the young lady look out of the window the old lady knocked again; and when nobody came she took up the furze-hook and looked at it, and put it down again, and then she looked at the faggot-bonds; and then she went away, and walked across to me, and blowed her breath very hard, like this. We walked on together, she and I, and I talked to her and she talked to me a bit, but not much, because she couldn't blow her breath.'

'Oh!' murmured Clym, in a low tone, and bowed his head. 'Let's have more,' he said.

'She couldn't talk much, and she couldn't walk; and her face was, O so queer!'

'How was her face?'

'Like yours is now.'

The woman looked at Yeobright, and beheld him colourless, in a cold sweat. 'Isn't there meaning in it?' she said stealthily. 'What do you think of her now?'

'Silence!' said Clym fiercely. And, turning to the boy, 'And then you left her to die?'

'No,' said the woman, quickly and angrily. 'He did not leave her to die! She sent him away. Whoever says he forsook her says what's not true.'

'Trouble no more about that,' answered Clym, with a quivering mouth. 'What he did is a trifle in comparison with what he saw. Door kept shut, did you say? Kept shut, she looking out of window? Good heart of God!—what does it mean?'

The child shrank away from the gaze of his questioner.

'He said so,' answered the mother, 'and Johnny's a God-fearing boy and tells no lies.'

'"Cast off by my son!" No, by my best life, dear mother, it is not so! But by your son's, your son's— May all murderesses get the torment they deserve!'

With these words Yeobright went forth from the little dwelling. The pupils of his eyes, fixed steadfastly on blankness, were vaguely lit with an icy shine; his mouth had passed into the phase more or less imaginatively rendered in studies of Oedipus. The strangest deeds were possible to his mood. But they were not possible to his situation. Instead of there being before him the pale face of Eustacia, and a masculine shape unknown, there was only

the imperturbable countenance of the heath, which, having defied the cataclysmal onsets of centuries, reduced to insignificance by its seamed and antique features the wildest turmoil of a single man.

III. EUSTACIA DRESSES HERSELF ON A BLACK MORNING

A CONSCIOUSNESS of a vast impassivity in all which lay around him took possession even of Yeobright in his wild walk towards Alderworth. He had once before felt in his own person this overpowering of the fervid by the inanimate; but then it had tended to enervate a passion far sweeter than that which at present pervaded him. It was once when he stood parting from Eustacia in the moist still levels beyond the hills.

But dismissing all this he went onward again, and came to the front of his house. The blinds of Eustacia's bedroom were still closely drawn, for she was no early riser. All the life visible was in the shape of a solitary thrush cracking a small snail upon the door-stone for his breakfast, and his tapping seemed a loud noise in the general silence which prevailed; but on going to the door Clym found it unfastened, the young girl who attended upon Eustacia being astir in the back part of the premises. Yeobright entered and went straight to his wife's room.

The noise of his arrival must have aroused her, for when he opened the door she was standing before the looking-glass in her night-dress, the ends of her hair gathered into one hand, with which she was coiling the whole mass round her head, previous to beginning toilette operations. She was not a woman given to speaking first at a meeting, and she allowed Clym to walk across in silence, without turning her head. He came behind her, and she saw his face in the glass. It was ashy, haggard, and terrible. Instead of starting towards him in sorrowful surprise, as even Eustacia, undemonstrative wife as she was, would have done in days before she burdened herself with a secret, she remained motionless, looking at him in the glass. And while she looked, the carmine flush with which warmth and sound sleep had suffused her cheeks and neck, dissolved from view, and the death-like pallor in his face flew across into hers. He was close enough to see this, and the sight instigated his tongue.

'You know what is the matter,' he said huskily. 'I see it in your face.'

Her hand relinquished the rope of hair and dropped to her side, and the pile of tresses, no longer supported, fell from the crown of her head about her shoulders and over the white night-gown. She made no reply.

'Speak to me,' said Yeobright peremptorily.

The blanching process did not cease in her, and her lips now became as white as her face. She turned to him and said, 'Yes, Clym, I'll speak to you. Why do you return so early? Can I do anything for you?'

'Yes, you can listen to me. It seems that my wife is not very well.'

'Why?'

'Your face, my dear; your face. Or perhaps it is the pale morning light which takes your colour away? Now I am going to reveal a secret to you. Ha-ha!'

'O, that is ghastly!'

'What?'

'Your laugh.'

'There's reason for ghastliness. Eustacia; you have held my happiness in the hollow of your hand, and like a devil you have dashed it down!'

She started back from the dressing-table, retreated a few steps from him, and looked him in the face. 'Ah! you think to frighten me,' she said, with a slight laugh. 'Is it worth while? I am undefended, and alone.'

'How extraordinary!'

'What do you mean?'

'As there is ample time I will tell you, though you know well enough. I mean that it is extraordinary that you should be alone in my absence. Tell me, now, where is he who was with you on the afternoon of the thirty-first of August? Under the bed? Up the chimney?'

A shudder overcame her and shook the light fabric of her night-dress throughout. 'I do not remember dates so exactly,' she said. 'I cannot recollect that anybody was with me besides yourself.'

'The day I mean,' said Yeobright, his voice growing louder and harsher, 'was the day you shut the door against my mother and killed her. O, it is too much—too bad!' He leant over the footpiece of the bedstead for a few moments, with his back towards her; then rising again: 'Tell me, tell me! tell me—do you hear?' he cried, rushing up to her and seizing her by the loose folds of her sleeve.

The superstratum of timidity which often overlies those who are daring and defiant at heart had been passed through, and the mettlesome substance of the woman was reached. The red blood inundated her face, previously so pale.

'What are you going to do?' she said in a low voice, regarding him with a proud smile. 'You will not alarm me by holding on so; but it would be a pity to tear my sleeve.'

Instead of letting go he drew her closer to him. 'Tell me the particulars of—my mother's death,' he said in a hard, panting whisper; 'or—I'll—I'll—'

'Clym,' she answered slowly, 'do you think you dare do anything to me that I dare not bear? But before you strike me listen. You will get nothing from me by a blow, even though it should kill me, as it probably will. But perhaps you do not wish me to speak—killing may be all you mean?'

'Kill you! Do you expect it?'

'I do.'

'Why?'

'No less degree of rage against me will match your previous grief for her.'

'Phew—I shall not kill you,' he said contemptuously, as if under a sudden change of purpose. 'I did think of it; but—I shall not. That would be

making a martyr of you, and sending you to where she is; and I would keep you away from her till the universe come to an end, if I could.'

'I almost wish you would kill me,' said she with gloomy bitterness. 'It is with no strong desire, I assure you, that I play the part I have lately played on earth. You are no blessing, my husband.'

'You shut the door—you looked out of the window upon her—you had a man in the house with you—you sent her away to die. The inhumanity—the treachery—I will not touch you—stand away from me—and confess every word!'

'Never! I'll hold my tongue like the very death that I don't mind meeting, even though I can clear myself of half you believe by speaking. Yes, I will! Who of any dignity would take the trouble to clear cobwebs from a wild man's mind after such language as this? No; let him go on, and think his narrow thoughts, and run his head into the mire. I have other cares.'

'Tis too much—but I must spare you.'

'Poor charity.'

'By my wretched soul you sting me, Eustacia! I can keep it up, and hotly too. Now, then, madam, tell me his name!'

'Never, I am resolved.'

'How often does he write to you? Where does he put his letters—when does he meet you? Ah, his letters! Do you tell me his name?'

'I do not.'

'Then I'll find it myself.' His eye had fallen upon a small desk that stood near, on which she was accustomed to write her letters. He went to it. It was locked.

'Unlock this!'

'You have no right to say it. That's mine.'

Without another word he seized the desk and dashed it to the floor. The hinge burst open, and a number of letters tumbled out.

'Stay!' said Eustacia, stepping before him with more excitement than she had hitherto shown.

'Come, come! stand away! I must see them.'

She looked at the letters as they lay, checked her feeling, and moved indifferently aside; when he gathered them up, and examined them.

By no stretch of meaning could any but a harmless construction be placed upon a single one of the letters themselves. The solitary exception was an empty envelope directed to her, and the handwriting was Wildeve's. Yeobright held it up. Eustacia was doggedly silent.

'Can you read, madam? Look at this envelope. Doubtless we shall find more soon, and what was inside them. I shall no doubt be gratified by learning in good time what a well-finished and full-blown adept in a certain trade my lady is.'

'Do you say it to me—do you?' she gasped.

He searched further, but found nothing more. 'What was in this letter?' he said.

'Ask the writer. Am I your hound that you should talk to me in this way?'

'Do you brave me? do you stand me out, mistress?' Answer. 'Don't look at me with those eyes as if you would bewitch me again! Sooner than that I die. You refuse to answer?'

'I wouldn't tell you after this, if I were as innocent as the sweetest babe in heaven!'

'Which you are not.'

'Certainly I am not absolutely,' she replied. 'I have not done what you suppose; but if to have done no harm at all is the only innocence recognized, I am beyond forgiveness. But I require no help from your conscience.'

'You can resist, and resist again! Instead of hating you I could, I think, mourn for and pity you, if you were contrite, and would confess all. Forgive you I never can. I don't speak of your lover—I will give you the benefit of the doubt in that matter, for it only affects me personally. But the other: had you half-killed *me*, had it been that you wilfully took the sight away from these feeble eyes of mine, I could have forgiven you. But *that's* too much for nature!'

'Say no more. I will do without your pity. But I would have saved you from uttering what you will regret.'

'I am going away now. I shall leave you.'

'You need not go, as I am going myself. You will keep just as far away from me by staying here.'

'Call her to mind—think of her—what goodness there was in her: it showed in every line of her face! Most women, even when but slightly annoyed, show a flicker of evil in some curl of the mouth or some corner of the cheek; but as for her, never in her angriest moments was there anything malicious in her look. She was angered quickly, but she forgave just as readily, and underneath her pride there was the meekness of a child. What came of it?—what cared you? You hated her just as she was learning to love you. O! couldn't you see what was best for you, but must bring a curse upon me, and agony and death upon her, by doing that cruel deed! What was the devil's name who was keeping you company and causing you to add cruelty to her to your wrong to me? Was it Wildeve? Was it poor Thomasin's husband? Heaven, what wickedness! Lost your voice, have you? It is natural after detection of that most noble trick. . . . Eustacia, didn't any tender thought of your own mother lead you to think of being gentle to mine at such a time of weariness? Did not one grain of pity enter your heart as she turned away? Think what a vast opportunity was then lost of beginning a forgiving and honest course. Why did not you kick him out, and let her in, and say, I'll be an honest wife and a noble woman from this hour? Had I told you to go and quench eternally our last flickering chance of happiness here you could have done no worse. Well, she's asleep now; and have you a hundred gallants, neither they nor you can insult her any more.'

'You exaggerate fearfully,' she said in a faint, weary voice; 'but I cannot enter into my defence—it is not worth doing. You are nothing to me in

future, and the past side of the story may as well remain untold. I have lost all through you, but I have not complained. Your blunders and misfortunes may have been a sorrow to you, but they have been a wrong to me. All persons of refinement have been scared away from me since I sank into the mire of marriage. Is this your cherishing—to put me into a hut like this, and keep me like the wife of a hind? You deceived me—not by words, but by appearances, which are less seen through than words. But the place will serve as well as any other—as somewhere to pass from—into my grave.’ Her words were smothered in her throat, and her head drooped down.

‘I don’t know what you mean by that. Am I the cause of your sin?’ (Eustacia made a trembling motion towards him.) ‘What, can you begin to shed tears and offer me your hand? Good God! can you? No, not I. I’ll not commit the fault of taking that.’ (The hand she had offered dropped nervelessly, but the tears continued flowing.) ‘Well, yes, I’ll take it, if only for the sake of my own foolish kisses that were wasted there before I knew what I cherished. How bewitched I was! How could there be any good in a woman that everybody spoke ill of?’

‘O, O, O!’ she cried, breaking down at last; and, shaking with sobs which choked her, she sank upon her knees. ‘O, will you have done! O, you are too relentless—there’s a limit to the cruelty of savages! I have held out long—but you crush me down. I beg for mercy—I cannot bear this any longer—it is inhuman to go further with this! If I had—killed your—mother with my own hand—I should not deserve such a scourging to the bone as this. O, O! God have mercy upon a miserable woman! . . . You have beaten me in this game—I beg you to stay your hand in pity! . . . I confess that I—wilfully did not undo the door the first time she knocked—but—I—should have unfastened it the second—if I had not thought you had gone to do it yourself. When I found you had not I opened it, but she was gone. That’s the extent of my crime—towards *her*. Best natures commit bad faults sometimes, don’t they?—I think they do. Now I will leave you—for ever and ever!’

‘Tell all, and I *will* pity you. Was the man in the house with you Wildeve?’

‘I cannot tell,’ she said desperately through her sobbing. ‘Don’t insist further—I cannot tell. I am going from this house. We cannot both stay here.’

‘You need not go: I will go. You can stay here.’

‘No, I will dress, and then I will go.’

‘Where?’

‘Where I came from, or *elsewhere*.’

She hastily dressed herself, Yeobright moodily walking up and down the room the whole of the time. At last all her things were on. Her little hands quivered so violently as she held them to her chin to fasten her bonnet that she could not tie the strings, and after a few moments she relinquished the attempt. Seeing this he moved forward and said, ‘Let me tie them.’

She assented in silence, and lifted her chin. For once at least in her life she was totally oblivious of the charm of her attitude. But he was not, and he turned his eyes aside, that he might not be tempted to softness.

The strings were tied; she turned from him. 'Do you still prefer going away yourself to my leaving you?' he inquired again.

'I do.'

'Very well—let it be. And when you will confess to the man I may pity you.'

She flung her shawl about her and went downstairs, leaving him standing in the room.

Eustacia had not long been gone when there came a knock at the door of the bedroom; and Yeobright said, 'Well?'

It was the servant; and she replied, 'Somebody from Mrs. Wildeve's have called to tell 'ee that the mis'ess and the baby are getting on wonderful well; and the baby's name is to be Eustacia Clementine.' And the girl retired.

'What a mockery!' said Clym. 'This unhappy marriage of mine to be perpetuated in that child's name!'

IV. THE MINISTRATIONS OF A HALF-FORGOTTEN ONE

EUSTACIA'S journey was at first as vague in direction as that of thistle-down in the wind. She did not know what to do. She wished it had been night instead of morning, that she might at least have borne her misery without the possibility of being seen. Going listlessly along between the dying ferns and the wet white spiders' webs, she at length turned her steps towards her grandfather's house. On reaching it she found the front door closed and locked. Mechanically she went round to the end where the stable was, and on looking in at the stable-door she saw Charley standing within.

'Captain Vye is not at home?' she said.

'No, ma'am,' said the lad in a flutter of feeling; 'he's gone to Weatherbury, and won't be home till night. And the servant is gone home for a holiday. So the house is locked up.'

Eustacia's face was not visible to Charley as she stood at the doorway, her back being to the sky, and the stable but indifferently lighted; but the wildness of her manner arrested his attention. She turned and walked away across the enclosure to the gate, and was hidden by the bank.

When she had disappeared Charley, with misgiving in his eyes, slowly came from the stable-door, and going to another point in the bank he looked over. Eustacia was leaning against it on the outside, her face covered with her hands, and her head pressing the dewy heather which bearded the bank's outer side. She appeared to be utterly indifferent to the circumstance that

her bonnet, hair, and garments were becoming wet and disarranged by the moisture of her cold, harsh pillow. Clearly something was wrong.

Charley had always regarded Eustacia as Eustacia had regarded Clym when she first beheld him—as a romantic and sweet vision, scarcely incarnate. He had been so shut off from her by the dignity of her look and the pride of her speech, except at that one blissful interval when he was allowed to hold her hand, that he had hardly deemed her a woman, wingless and earthly, subject to household conditions and domestic jars. The inner details of her life he had only conjectured. She had been a lovely wonder, predestined to an orbit in which the whole of his own was but a point; and this sight of her leaning like a helpless, despairing creature against a wild wet bank, filled him with an amazed horror. He could no longer remain where he was. Leaping over, he came up, touched her with his finger, and said tenderly, 'You are poorly, ma'am. What can I do?'

Eustacia started up, and said, 'Ah, Charley—you have followed me. You did not think when I left home in the summer that I should come back like this!'

'I did not, dear ma'am. Can I help you now?'

'I am afraid not. I wish I could get into the house. I feel giddy—that's all.'

'Lean on my arm, ma'am, till we get to the porch; and I will try to open the door.'

He supported her to the porch, and there depositing her on a seat hastened to the back, climbed to a window by the help of a ladder, and descending inside opened the door. Next he assisted her into the room, where there was an old-fashioned horsehair settee as large as a donkey-waggon. She lay down here, and Charley covered her with a cloak he found in the hall.

'Shall I get you something to eat and drink?' he said.

'If you please, Charley. But I suppose there is no fire?'

'I can light it, ma'am.'

He vanished, and she heard a splitting of wood and a blowing of bellows; and presently he returned, saying, 'I have lighted a fire in the kitchen, and now I'll light one here.'

He lit the fire, Eustacia dreamily observing him from her couch. When it was blazing up he said, 'Shall I wheel you round in front of it, ma'am, as the morning is chilly?'

'Yes, if you like.'

'Shall I go and bring your breakfast now?'

'Yes, do,' she murmured languidly.

When he had gone, and the dull sounds occasionally reached her ears of his movements in the kitchen, she forgot where she was, and had for a moment to consider by an effort what the sounds meant. After an interval which seemed short to her whose thoughts were elsewhere, he came in with a tray on which steamed tea and toast.

'Place it on the table,' she said. 'I shall be ready soon.'

He did so, and retired to the door: when, however, he perceived that she did not move he came back a few steps.

'Let me hold it to you, if you don't wish to get up,' said Charley. He brought the tray to the front of the couch, where he knelt down, adding, 'I will hold it for you.'

Eustacia sat up and poured out a cup of tea. 'You are very kind to me, Charley,' she murmured as she sipped.

'Well, I ought to be,' said he diffidently, taking great trouble not to rest his eyes upon her, though this was their only natural position, Eustacia being immediately before him. 'You have been kind to me.'

'How have I?' said Eustacia.

'You let me hold your hand when you were a maiden at home.'

'Ah, so I did. Why did I do that? My mind is lost—it had to do with the mumming, had it not?'

'Yes, you wanted to go in my place.'

'I remember. I do indeed remember—too well!'

She again became utterly downcast; and Charley, seeing that she was not going to eat or drink any more, took away the tray.

Afterwards he occasionally came in to see if the fire was burning, to ask her if she wanted anything, to tell her that the wind had shifted from south to west, to ask her if she would like him to gather her some blackberries; to all which inquiries she replied in the negative or with indifference.

She remained on the settee some time longer, when she aroused herself and went upstairs. The room in which she had formerly slept still remained much as she had left it, and the recollection that this forced upon her of her own greatly changed and infinitely worsened situation again set on her face the undetermined and formless misery which it had worn on her first arrival. She peeped into her grandfather's room, through which the fresh autumn air was blowing from the open windows. Her eye was arrested by what was a familiar sight enough, though it broke upon her now with a new significance.

It was a brace of pistols, hanging near the head of her grandfather's bed, which he always kept there loaded, as a precaution against possible burglars, the house being very lonely. Eustacia regarded them long, as if they were the page of a book in which she read a new and a strange matter. Quickly, like one afraid of herself, she returned downstairs and stood in deep thought.

'If I could only do it!' she said. 'It would be doing much good to myself and all connected with me, and no harm to a single one.'

The idea seemed to gather force within her, and she remained in a fixed attitude nearly ten minutes, when a certain finality was expressed in her gaze, and no longer the blankness of indecision.

She turned and went up the second time—softly and stealthily now—and entered her grandfather's room, her eyes at once seeking the head of the bed. The pistols were gone.

The instant quashing of her purpose by their absence affected her brain

as a sudden vacuum affects the body: she nearly fainted. Who had done this? There was only one person on the premises besides herself. Eustacia involuntarily turned to the open window which overlooked the garden as far as the bank that bounded it. On the summit of the latter stood Charley, sufficiently elevated by its height to see into the room. His gaze was directed eagerly and solicitously upon her.

She went downstairs to the door and beckoned to him.

'You have taken them away?'

'Yes, ma'am.'

'Why did you do it?'

'I saw you looking at them too long.'

'What has that to do with it?'

'You have been heart-broken all the morning, as if you did not want to live.'

'Well?'

'And I could not bear to leave them in your way. There was meaning in your look at them.'

'Where are they now?'

'Locked up.'

'Where?'

'In the stable.'

'Give them to me.'

'No, ma'am.'

'You refuse?'

'I do. I care too much for you to give 'em up.'

She turned aside, her face for the first time softening from the stony immobility of the earlier day, and the corners of her mouth resuming something of that delicacy of cut which was always lost in her moments of despair. At last she confronted him again.

'Why should I not die if I wish?' she said tremulously. 'I have made a bad bargain with life, and I am weary of it—weary. And now you have hindered my escape. O, why did you, Charley! What makes death painful except the thought of others' grief?—and that is absent in my case, for not a sigh would follow me!'

'Ah, it is trouble that has done this! I wish in my very soul that he who brought it about might die and rot, even if 'tis transportation to say it!'

'Charley, no more of that. What do you mean to do about this you have seen?'

'Keep it close as night, if you promise not to think of it again.'

'You need not fear. The moment has passed. I promise.' She then went away, entered the house, and lay down.

Later in the afternoon her grandfather returned. He was about to question her categorically; but on looking at her he withheld his words.

'Yes, it is too bad to talk of,' she slowly returned in answer to his glance.

'Can my old room be got ready for me to-night, grandfather? I shall want to occupy it again.'

He did not ask what it all meant, or why she had left her husband, but ordered the room to be prepared.

V. AN OLD MOVE INADVERTENTLY REPEATED

CHARLEY's attentions to his former mistress were unbounded. The only solace to his own trouble lay in his attempts to relieve hers. Hour after hour he considered her wants: he thought of her presence there with a sort of gratitude, and, while uttering imprecations on the cause of her unhappiness, in some measure blessed the result. Perhaps she would always remain there, he thought, and then he would be as happy as he had been before. His dread was lest she should think fit to return to Alderworth, and in that dread his eyes, with all the inquisitiveness of affection, frequently sought her face when she was not observing him, as he would have watched the head of a stockdove to learn if it contemplated flight. Having once really succoured her, and possibly preserved her from the rashest of acts, he mentally assumed in addition a guardian's responsibility for her welfare.

For this reason he busily endeavoured to provide her with pleasant distractions, bringing home curious objects which he found in the heath, such as white trumpet-shaped mosses, red-headed lichens, stone arrow-heads used by the old tribes on Egdon, and faceted crystals from the hollows of flints. These he deposited on the premises in such positions that she should see them as if by accident.

A week passed, Eustacia never going out of the house. Then she walked into the enclosed plot and looked through her grandfather's spy-glass, as she had been in the habit of doing before her marriage. One day she saw, at a place where the high-road crossed the distant valley, a heavily laden waggon passing along. It was piled with household furniture. She looked again and again, and recognized it to be her own. In the evening her grandfather came indoors with a rumour that Yeobright had removed that day from Alderworth to the old house at Blooms-End.

On another occasion when reconnoitring thus she beheld two female figures walking in the vale. The day was fine and clear; and the persons not being more than half a mile off she could see their every detail with the telescope. The woman walking in front carried a white bundle in her arms, from one end of which hung a long appendage of drapery; and when the walkers turned, so that the sun fell more directly upon them, Eustacia could see that the object was a baby. She called Charley, and asked him if he knew who they were, though she well guessed.

'Mrs. Wildeve and the nurse-girl,' said Charley.

'The nurse is carrying the baby?' said Eustacia.

'No, 'tis Mrs. Wildeva carrying that,' he answered, 'and the nurse walks behind carrying nothing.'

The lad was in good spirits that day, for the fifth of November had again come round, and he was planning yet another scheme to divert her from her too absorbing thoughts. For two successive years his mistress had seemed to take pleasure in lighting a bonfire on the bank overlooking the valley; but this year she had apparently quite forgotten the day and the customary deed. He was careful not to remind her, and went on with his secret preparations for a cheerful surprise, the more zealously that he had been absent last time and unable to assist. At every vacant minute he hastened to gather furze-stumps, thorn-tree roots, and other solid materials from the adjacent slopes, hiding them from cursory view.

The evening came, and Eustacia was still seemingly unconscious of the anniversary. She had gone indoors after her survey through the glass, and had not been visible since. As soon as it was quite dark Charley began to build a bonfire, choosing precisely that spot on the bank which Eustacia had chosen at previous times.

When all the surrounding bonfires had burst into existence Charley kindled his, and arranged its fuel so that it should not require tending for some time. He then went back to the house, and lingered round the door and windows till she should by some means or other learn of his achievement and come out to witness it. But the shutters were closed, the door remained shut, and no heed whatever seemed to be taken of his performance. Not liking to call her he went back and replenished the fire, continuing to do this for more than half an hour. It was not till his stock of fuel had greatly diminished that he went to the back door and sent in to beg that Mrs. Yeobright would open the window-shutters and see the sight outside.

Eustacia, who had been sitting listlessly in the parlour, started up at the intelligence and flung open the shutters. Facing her on the bank blazed the fire, which at once sent a ruddy glare into the room where she was, and overpowered the candles.

'Well done, Charley!' said Captain Vye from the chimney-corner. 'But I hope it is not my wood that he's burning. . . . Ah, it was this time last year that I met with that man Venn, bringing home Thomasin Yeobright—to be sure it was! Well, who would have thought that girl's troubles would have ended so well? What a snipe you were in that matter, Eustacia! Has your husband written to you yet?'

'No,' said Eustacia, looking vaguely through the window at the fire, which just then so much engaged her mind that she did not resent her grandfather's blunt opinion. She could see Charley's form on the bank, shovelling and stirring the fire; and there flashed upon her imagination some other form which that fire might call up.

She left the room, put on her garden-bonnet and cloak, and went out. Reaching the bank she looked over with a wild curiosity and misgiving, when

Charley said to her, with a pleased sense to himself, 'I made it o' purpose for you, ma'am.'

'Thank you,' she said hastily. 'But I wish you to put it out now.'

'It will soon burn down,' said Charley, rather disappointed. 'Is it not a pity to knock it out?'

'I don't know,' she musingly answered.

They stood in silence, broken only by the crackling of the flames, till Charley, perceiving that she did not want to talk to him, moved reluctantly away.

Eustacia remained within the bank looking at the fire, intending to go indoors, yet lingering still. Had she not by her situation been inclined to hold in indifference all things honoured of the gods and of men she would probably have gone away. But her state was so hopeless that she could play with it. To have lost is less disturbing than to wonder if we may possibly have won: and Eustacia could now, like other people at such a stage, taking a standing-point outside herself, observe herself as a disinterested spectator, and think what a sport for Heaven this woman Eustacia was.

While she stood she heard a sound. It was the splash of a stone in the pond.

Had Eustacia received the stone full in the bosom her heart could not have given a more decided thump. She had thought of the possibility of such a signal in answer to that which had been unwittingly given by Charley; but she had not expected it yet. How prompt Wildeve was! Yet how could he think her capable of deliberately wishing to renew their assignations now? An impulse to leave the spot, a desire to stay, struggled within her; and the desire held its own. More than that it did not do, for she refrained even from ascending the bank and looking over. She remained motionless, not disturbing a muscle of her face or raising her eyes; for were she to turn up her face the fire on the bank would shine upon it, and Wildeve might be looking down.

There was a second splash into the pond.

Why did he stay so long without advancing and looking over? Curiosity had its way: she ascended one or two of the earth-steps in the bank and glanced out.

Wildeve was before her. He had come forward after throwing the last pebble, and the fire now shone into each of their faces from the bank stretching breast-high between them.

'I did not light it!' cried Eustacia quickly. 'It was lit without my knowledge. Don't, don't come over to me!'

'Why have you been living here all these days without telling me? You have left your home. I fear I am something to blame in this?'

'I did not let in his mother; that's how it is!'

'You do not deserve what you have got, Eustacia; you are in great misery; I see it in your eyes, your mouth, and all over you. My poor, poor girl!' He stepped over the bank. 'You are beyond everything unhappy!'

'No, no; not exactly——'

'It has been pushed too far—it is killing you: I do think it!'

Her usually quiet breathing had grown quicker with his words. 'I—I——' she began, and then burst into quivering sobs, shaken to the very heart by the unexpected voice of pity—a sentiment whose existence in relation to herself she had almost forgotten.

This outbreak of weeping took Eustacia herself so much by surprise that she could not leave off, and she turned aside from him in some shame, though turning hid nothing from him. She sobbed on desperately; then the outpour lessened, and she became quieter. Wildeve had resisted the impulse to clasp her, and stood without speaking.

'Are you not ashamed of me, who used never to be a crying animal?' she asked in a weak whisper as she wiped her eyes. 'Why didn't you go away? I wish you had not seen quite all that; it reveals too much by half.'

'You might have wished it, because it makes me as sad as you,' he said with emotion and deference. 'As for revealing—the word is impossible between us two.'

'I did not send for you—don't forget it, Damon; I am in pain, but I did not send for you! As a wife, at least, I've been straight.'

'Never mind—I came. O, Eustacia, forgive me for the harm I have done you in these two past years! I see more and more that I have been your ruin.'

'Not you. This place I live in.'

'Ah, your generosity may naturally make you say that. But I am the culprit. I should either have done more or nothing at all.'

'In what way?'

'I ought never to have hunted you out; or, having done it, I ought to have persisted in retaining you. But of course I have no right to talk of that now. I will only ask this: can I do anything for you? Is there anything on the face of the earth that a man can do to make you happier than you are at present? If there is, I will do it. You may command me, Eustacia, to the limit of my influence; and don't forget that I am richer now. Surely something can be done to save you from this! Such a rare plant in such a wild place it grieves me to see. Do you want anything bought? Do you want to go anywhere? Do you want to escape the place altogether? Only say it, and I'll do anything to put an end to those tears, which but for me would never have been at all.'

'We are each married to another person,' she said faintly; 'and assistance from you would have an evil sound—after—after——'

'Well, there's no preventing slanderers from having their fill at any time; but you need not be afraid. Whatever I may feel I promise you on my word of honour never to speak to you about—or act upon—until you say I may. I know my duty to Thomasin quite as well as I know my duty to you as a woman unfairly treated. What shall I assist you in?'

'In getting away from here.'

'Where do you wish to go to?'

'I have a place in my mind. If you could help me as far as Budmouth I can do all the rest. Steamers sail from there across the Channel, and so I can get to Paris, where I want to be. Yes,' she pleaded earnestly, 'help me to get to Budmouth harbour without my grandfather's or my husband's knowledge, and I can do all the rest.'

'Will it be safe to leave you there alone?'

'Yes, yes. I know Budmouth well.'

'Shall I go with you? I am rich now.'

She was silent.

'Say yes, sweet!'

She was silent still.

'Well, let me know when you wish to go. We shall be at our present house till December; after that we remove to Casterbridge. Command me in anything till that time.'

'I will think of this,' she said hurriedly. 'Whether I can honestly make use of you as a friend, or must close with you as a lover—that is what I must ask myself. If I wish to go and decide to accept your company I will signal to you some evening at eight o'clock punctually, and this will mean that you are to be ready with a horse and trap at twelve o'clock the same night to drive me to Budmouth harbour in time for the morning boat.'

'I will look out every night at eight, and no signal shall escape me.'

'Now please go away. If I decide on this escape I can only meet you once more unless—I cannot go without you. Go—I cannot bear it longer. Go—go!'

Wildevé slowly went up the steps and descended into the darkness on the other side; and as he walked he glanced back, till the bank blotted out her form from his further view.

VI. THOMASIN ARGUES WITH HER COUSIN, AND HE WRITES A LETTER

YEOFBRIGHT was at this time at Blooms-End, hoping that Eustacia would return to him. The removal of furniture had been accomplished only that day, though Clym had lived in the old house for more than a week. He had spent the time in working about the premises, sweeping leaves from the garden-paths, cutting dead stalks from the flower-beds, and nailing up creepers which had been displaced by the autumn winds. He took no particular pleasure in these deeds, but they formed a screen between himself and despair. Moreover, it had become a religion with him to preserve in good condition all that had lapsed from his mother's hands to his own.

During these operations he was constantly on the watch for Eustacia. That there should be no mistake about her knowing where to find him he had ordered a notice-board to be affixed to the garden gate at Alderworth, signify-

ing in white letters whither he had removed. When a leaf floated to the earth he turned his head, thinking it might be her footfall. A bird searching for worms in the mould of the flower-beds sounded like her hand on the latch of the gate; and at dusk, when soft, strange ventriloquisms came from holes in the ground, hollow stalks, curled dead leaves, and other crannies wherein breezes, worms, and insects can work their will, he fancied that they were Eustacia, standing without and breathing wishes of reconciliation.

Up to this time he had persevered in his resolve not to invite her back. At the same time the severity with which he had treated her lulled the sharpness of his regret for his mother, and awoke some of his old solicitude for his mother's supplanter. Harsh feelings produce harsh usage, and this by reaction quenches the sentiments that gave it birth. The more he reflected the more he softened. But to look upon his wife as innocence in distress was impossible, though he could ask himself whether he had given her quite time enough—if he had not come a little too suddenly upon her on that sombre morning.

Now that the first flush of his anger had paled he was disinclined to ascribe to her more than an indiscreet friendship with Wildeve, for there had not appeared in her manner the signs of dishonour. And this once admitted, an absolutely dark interpretation of her act towards his mother was no longer forced upon him.

On the evening of the fifth November his thoughts of Eustacia were intense. Echoes from those past times when they had exchanged tender words all the day long came like the diffused murmur of a seashore left miles behind. 'Surely,' he said, 'she might have brought herself to communicate with me before now, and confess honestly what Wildeve was to her.'

Instead of remaining at home that night he determined to go and see Thomasin and her husband. If he found opportunity he would allude to the cause of the separation between Eustacia and himself, keeping silence, however, on the fact that there was a third person in his house when his mother was turned away. If it proved that Wildeve was innocently there he would doubtless openly mention it. If he were there with unjust intentions Wildeve, being a man of quick feeling, might possibly say something to reveal the extent to which Eustacia was compromised.

But on reaching his cousin's house he found that only Thomasin was at home, Wildeve being at that time on his way towards the bonfire innocently lit by Charley at Mistover. Thomasin then, as always, was glad to see Clym, and took him to inspect the sleeping baby, carefully screening the candlelight from the infant's eyes with her hand.

'Tamsin, have you heard that Eustacia is not with me now?' he said when they had sat down again.

'No,' said Thomasin, alarmed.

'And not that I have left Alderworth?'

'No. I never hear tidings from Alderworth unless you bring them. What is the matter?'

Clym in a disturbed voice related to her his visit to Susan Nunsuch's boy, the revelation he had made, and what had resulted from his charging Eustacia with having wilfully and heartlessly done the deed. He suppressed all mention of Wildeve's presence with her.

'All this, and I not knowing it!' murmured Thomasin in an awestruck tone. 'Terrible! What could have made her— O, Eustacia! And when you found it out you went in hot haste to her? Were you too cruel?—or is she really so wicked as she seems?'

'Can a man be too cruel to his mother's enemy?'

'I can fancy so.'

'Very well, then—I'll admit that he can. But now what is to be done?'

'Make it up again—if a quarrel so deadly can ever be made up. I almost wish you had not told me. But do try to be reconciled. There are ways, after all, if you both wish to.'

'I don't know that we do both wish to make it up,' said Clym. 'If she had wished it, would she not have sent to me by this time?'

'You seem to wish to, and yet you have not sent to her.'

'True; but I have been tossed to and fro in doubt if I ought, after such strong provocation. To see me now, Thomasin, gives you no idea of what I have been; of what depths I have descended to in these few last days. O, it was a bitter shame to shut out my mother like that! Can I ever forget it, or even agree to see her again?'

'She might not have known that anything serious would come of it, and perhaps she did not mean to keep aunt out altogether.'

'She says herself that she did not. But the fact remains that keep her out she did.'

'Believe her sorry, and send for her.'

'How if she will not come?'

'It will prove her guilty, by showing that it is her habit to nourish enmity. But I do not think that for a moment.'

'I will do this. I will wait for a day or two longer—not longer than two days certainly; and if she does not send to me in that time I will indeed send to her. I thought to have seen Wildeve here to-night. Is he from home?'

Thomasin blushed a little. 'No,' she said. 'He is merely gone out for a walk.'

'Why didn't he take you with him? The evening is fine. You want fresh air as well as he.'

'O, I don't care for going anywhere; besides, there is baby.'

'Yes, yes. Well, I have been thinking whether I should not consult your husband about this as well as you,' said Clym steadily.

'I fancy I would not,' she quickly answered. 'It can do no good.'

Her cousin looked her in the face. No doubt Thomasin was ignorant that her husband had any share in the events of that tragic afternoon; but her countenance seemed to signify that she concealed some suspicion or thought of the reputed tender relations between Wildeve and Eustacia in days gone by.

Clym, however, could make nothing of it, and he rose to depart, more in doubt than when he came.

'You will write to her in a day or two?' said the young woman earnestly. 'I do so hope the wretched separation may come to an end.'

'I will,' said Clym; 'I don't rejoice in my present state at all.'

And he left her and climbed the hills to Blooms-End. Before going to bed he sat down and wrote the following letter:—

'MY DEAR EUSTACIA,—I must obey my heart without consulting my reason too closely. Will you come back to me? Do so, and the past shall never be mentioned. I was too severe; but O, Eustacia, the provocation! You don't know, you never will know, what those words of anger cost me which you drew down upon yourself. All that an honest man can promise you I promise now, which is that from me you shall never suffer anything on this score again. After all the vows we have made, Eustacia, I think we had better pass the remainder of our lives in trying to keep them. Come to me, then, even if you reproach me. I have thought of your sufferings that morning on which I parted from you; I know they were genuine, and they are as much as you ought to bear. Our love must still continue. Such hearts as ours would never have been given us but to be concerned with each other. I could not ask you back at first, Eustacia, for I was unable to persuade myself that he who was with you was not there as a lover. But if you will come and explain distracting appearances I do not question that you can show your honesty to me. Why have you not come before? Do you think I will not listen to you? Surely not, when you remember the kisses and vows we exchanged under the summer moon. Return then, and you shall be warmly welcomed. I can no longer think of you to your prejudice—I am but too much absorbed in justifying you.—Your husband as ever,

'CLYM.'

'There,' he said, as he laid it in his desk, 'that's a good thing done. If she does not come before to-morrow night I will send it to her.'

Meanwhile, at the house he had just left Thomasin sat sighing uneasily. Fidelity to her husband had that evening induced her to conceal all suspicion that Wildeve's interest in Eustacia had not ended with his marriage. But she knew nothing positive; and though Clym was her well-beloved cousin there was one nearer to her still.

When, a little later, Wildeve returned from his walk to Mistover, Thomasin said, 'Damon, where have you been? I was getting quite frightened, and thought you had fallen into the river. I dislike being in the house by myself.'

'Frightened?' he said, touching her cheek as if she were some domestic animal. 'Why, I thought nothing could frighten you. It is that you are getting proud, I am sure, and don't like living here since we have risen above our business. Well, it is a tedious matter, this getting a new house; but I couldn't have set about it sooner, unless our ten thousand pounds had been a hundred thousand, when we could have afforded to despise caution.'

'No—I don't mind waiting—I would rather stay here twelve months longer than run any risk with baby. But I don't like your vanishing so in the evenings. There's something on your mind—I know there is, Damon. You go about so gloomily, and look at the heath as if it were somebody's gaol instead of a nice wild place to walk in.'

He looked towards her with pitying surprise. 'What, do you like Egdon Heath?' he said.

'I like what I was born near to; I admire its grim old face.'

'Pooh, my dear. You don't know what you like.'

'I am sure I do. There's only one thing unpleasant about Egdon.'

'What's that?'

'You never take me with you when you walk there. Why do you wander so much in it yourself if you so dislike it?'

The inquiry, though a simple one, was plainly disconcerting, and he sat down before replying. 'I don't think you often see me there. Give an instance.'

'I will,' she answered triumphantly. 'When you went out this evening I thought that as baby was asleep I would see where you were going to so mysteriously without telling me. So I ran out and followed behind you. You stopped at the place where the road forks, looked round at the bonfires, and then said, "Damn it, I'll go!" And you went quickly up the left-hand road. Then I stood and watched you.'

Wildevé frowned, afterwards saying, with a forced smile, 'Well, what wonderful discovery did you make?'

'There—now you are angry, and we won't talk of this any more.' She went across to him, sat on a footstool, and looked up in his face.

'Nonsense!' he said; 'that's how you always back out. We will go on with it now we have begun. What did you next see? I particularly want to know.'

'Don't be like that, Damon!' she murmured. 'I didn't see anything. You vanished out of sight, and then I looked round at the bonfires and came in.'

'Perhaps this is not the only time you have dogged my steps. Are you trying to find out something bad about me?'

'Not at all! I have never done such a thing before, and I shouldn't have done it now if words had not sometimes been dropped about you.'

'What *do* you mean?' he impatiently asked.

'They say—they say you used to go to Alderworth in the evenings, and it puts into my mind what I have heard about—'

Wildevé turned angrily and stood up in front of her. 'Now,' he said, flourishing his hand in the air, 'just out with it, madam! I demand to know what remarks you have heard.'

'Well, I heard that you used to be very fond of Eustacia—nothing more than that, though told more in a bit-by-bit way. You ought not to be angry!'

He observed that her eyes were brimming with tears. 'Well,' he said,

'there is nothing new in that, and of course I don't mean to be rough towards you, so you need not cry. Now, don't let's speak of the subject any more.'

And no more was said, Thomasin being glad enough of a reason for not mentioning Clym's visit to her that evening, and his story.

VII. THE NIGHT OF THE SIXTH OF NOVEMBER

HAVING resolved on flight Eustacia at times seemed anxious that something should happen to thwart her own intention. The only event that could really change her position was the appearance of Clym. The glory which had encircled him as her lover was departed now; yet some good simple quality of his would occasionally return to her memory and stir a momentary throb of hope that he would again present himself before her. But calmly considered it was not likely that such a severance as now existed would ever close up: she would have to live on as a painful object, isolated, and out of place. She had used to think of the heath alone as an uncongenial spot to be in; she felt it now of the whole world.

Towards evening on the sixth her determination to go away again revived. About four o'clock she packed up anew the few small articles she had brought in her flight from Alderworth, and also some belonging to her which had been left here: the whole formed a bundle not too large to be carried in her hand for a distance of a mile or two. The scene without grew darker; mud-coloured clouds bellied downwards from the sky like vast hammocks slung across it, and with the increase of night a stormy wind arose; but as yet there was no rain.

Eustacia could not rest indoors, having nothing more to do, and she wandered to and fro on the hill, not far from the house she was soon to leave. In these desultory ramblings she passed the cottage of Susan Nunsuch, a little lower down than her grandfather's. The door was ajar, and a riband of bright firelight fell over the ground without. As Eustacia crossed the firebeams she appeared for an instant as distinct as a figure in a phantasmagoria—a creature of light surrounded by an area of darkness; the moment passed, and she was absorbed in night again.

A woman who was sitting inside the cottage had seen and recognized her in that momentary irradiation. This was Susan herself, occupied in preparing a posset for her little boy, who, often ailing, was now seriously unwell. Susan dropped the spoon, shook her fist at the vanished figure, and then proceeded with her work in a musing, absent way.

At eight o'clock, the hour at which Eustacia had promised to signal to Wildeve if ever she signalled at all, she looked around the premises to learn if the coast was clear, went to the furze-rick, and pulled thence a long-stemmed bough of that fuel. This she carried to the corner of the bank, and, glancing behind to see if the shutters were all closed, she struck a light, and

kindled the furze. When it was thoroughly ablaze Eustacia took it by the stem and waved it in the air above her head till it had burned itself out.

She was gratified, if gratification were possible to such a mood, by seeing a similar light in the vicinity of Wildeve's residence a minute or two later. Having agreed to keep watch at this hour every night, in case she should require assistance, this promptness proved how strictly he had held to his word. Four hours after the present time, that is, at midnight, he was to be ready to drive her to Budmouth, as prearranged.

Eustacia returned to the house. Supper having been got over she retired early, and sat in her bedroom waiting for the time to go by. The night being dark and threatening Captain Vye had not strolled out to gossip in any cottage or to call at the inn, as was sometimes his custom on these long autumn nights; and he sat sipping grog alone downstairs. About ten o'clock there was a knock at the door. When the servant opened it the rays of the candle fell upon the form of Fairway.

'I was a-forced to go to Lower Mistovert to-night,' he said; 'and Mr. Yeobright asked me to leave this here on my way; but, faith, I put it in the lining of my hat, and thought no more about it till I got back and was hasping my gate before going to bed. So I have run back with it at once.'

He handed in a letter and went his way. The girl brought it to the captain, who found that it was directed to Eustacia. He turned it over and over, and fancied that the writing was her husband's, though he could not be sure. However, he decided to let her have it at once if possible, and took it upstairs for that purpose; but on reaching the door of her room and looking in at the keyhole he found there was no light within, the fact being that Eustacia, without undressing, had flung herself upon the bed, to rest and gather a little strength for her coming journey. Her grandfather concluded from what he saw that he ought not to disturb her; and descending again to the parlour, he placed the letter on the mantelpiece to give it to her in the morning.

At eleven o'clock he went to bed himself, smoked for some time in his bedroom, put out his light at half-past eleven, and then, as was his invariable custom, pulled up the blind before getting into bed, that he might see which way the wind blew on opening his eyes in the morning, his bedroom window commanding a view of the flagstaff and vane. Just as he had lain down he was surprised to observe the white pole of the staff flash into existence like a streak of phosphorus drawn downwards across the shade of night without. Only one explanation met this—a light had been suddenly thrown upon the pole from the direction of the house. As everybody had retired to rest the old man felt it necessary to get out of bed, open the window softly, and look to the right and left. Eustacia's bedroom was lighted up, and it was the shine from her window which had lighted the pole. Wondering what had aroused her he remained undecided at the window, and was thinking of fetching the letter to slip it under her door, when he heard a slight brushing of garments on the partition dividing his room from the passage.

The captain concluded that Eustacia, feeling wakeful, had gone for a

book, and would have dismissed the matter as unimportant if he had not also heard her distinctly weeping.

'She is thinking of that husband of hers,' he said to himself. 'Ah, the silly goose! she had no business to marry him. I wonder if that letter is really his?'

He arose, threw his boat-cloak round him, opened the door, and said, 'Eustacia!' There was no answer. 'Eustacia!' he repeated louder, 'there is a letter on the mantelpiece for you.'

But no response was made to this statement save an imaginary one from the wind, which seemed to gnaw at the corners of the house, and the stroke of a few drops of rain upon the windows.

He went on to the landing, and stood waiting nearly five minutes. Still she did not return. He went back for a light, and prepared to follow her; but first he looked into her bedroom. There, on the outside of the quilt, was the impression of her form, showing that the bed had not been opened; and, what was more significant, she had not taken her candlestick downstairs. He was now thoroughly alarmed; and hastily putting on his clothes he descended to the front door, which he himself had bolted and locked. It was now unfastened. There was no longer any doubt that Eustacia had left the house at this midnight hour; and whither could she have gone? To follow her was almost impossible. Had the dwelling stood in an ordinary road, two persons setting out, one in each direction, might have made sure of overtaking her; but it was a hopeless task to seek for anybody on a heath in the dark, the practicable directions for flight across it from any point being as numerous as the meridians radiating from the pole. Perplexed what to do he looked into the parlour, and was vexed to find that the letter still lay there untouched.

At half-past eleven, finding that the house was silent, Eustacia had lighted her candle, put on some warm outer wrappings, taken her bag in her hand, and, extinguishing the light again, descended the staircase. When she got into the outer air she found that it had begun to rain, and as she stood pausing at the door it increased, threatening to come on heavily. But having committed herself to this line of action there was no retreating for bad weather, since Wildeve had been communicated with, and was probably even then waiting for her. The gloom of the night was funereal; all nature seemed clothed in crape. The spiky points of the fir trees behind the house rose into the sky like the turrets and pinnacles of an abbey. Nothing below the horizon was visible save a light which was still burning in the cottage of Susan Nunsuch.

Eustacia opened her umbrella and went out from the enclosure by the steps over the bank, after which she was beyond all danger of being perceived. Skirting the pool she followed the path towards Rainbarrow, occasionally stumbling over twisted furze-roots, tufts of rushes, or oozing lumps of fleshy fungi, which at this season lay scattered about the heath like the rotten liver and lungs of some colossal animal. The moon and stars were closed up by cloud and rain to the degree of extinction. It was a night which led the

traveller's thoughts instinctively to dwell on nocturnal scenes of disaster in the chronicles of the world on all that is terrible and dark in history and legend—the last plague of Egypt, the destruction of Sennacherib's host, the agony in Gethsemane.

Eustacia at length reached Rainbarrow, and stood still there to think. Never was harmony more perfect than that between the chaos of her mind and the chaos of the world without. A sudden recollection had flashed on her this moment: she had not money enough for undertaking a long journey. Amid the fluctuating sentiments of the day her unpractical mind had not dwelt on the necessity of being well-provided, and now that she thoroughly realized the conditions she sighed bitterly and ceased to stand erect, gradually crouching down under the umbrella as if she were drawn into the Barrow by a hand from beneath. Could it be that she was to remain a captive still? Money: she had never felt its value before. Even to efface herself from the country means were required. To ask Wildeve for pecuniary aid without allowing him to accompany her was impossible to a woman with the shadow of pride left in her: to fly as his mistress—and she knew that he loved her—was of the nature of humiliation.

Any one who had stood by now would have pitied her, not so much on account of her exposure to weather, and isolation from all of humanity except the mouldered remains inside the Barrow; but for that other form of misery which was denoted by the slightly rocking movement that her feelings imparted to her person. Extreme unhappiness weighed visibly upon her. Between the drippings of the rain from her umbrella to her mantle, from her mantle to the heather, from the heather to the earth, very similar sounds could be heard coming from her lips; and the tearfulness of the outer scene was repeated upon her face. The wings of her soul were broken by the cruel obstructiveness of all about her; and even had she seen herself in a promising way of getting to Budmouth, entering a steamer, and sailing to some opposite port, she would have been but little more buoyant, so fearfully malignant were other things. She uttered words aloud. When a woman in such a situation, neither old, deaf, crazed, nor whimsical, takes upon herself to sob and soliloquize aloud there is something grievous the matter.

'Can I go, can I go?' she moaned. 'He's not *great* enough for me to give myself to—he does not suffice for my desire! . . . If he had been a Saul or a Bonaparte—ah! But to break my marriage vow for him—it is too poor a luxury! . . . And I have no money to go alone! And if I could, what comfort to me? I must drag on next year, as I have dragged on this year, and the year after that as before. How I have tried and tried to be a splendid woman, and how destiny has been against me! . . . I do not deserve my lot!' she cried in a frenzy of bitter revolt. 'O, the cruelty of putting me into this ill-conceived world! I was capable of much; but I have been injured and blighted and crushed by things beyond my control! O, how hard it is of Heaven to devise such tortures for me, who have done no harm to Heaven at all!'

The distant light which Eustacia had cursorily observed in leaving the house came, as she had divined, from the cottage-window of Susan Nunsuch. What Eustacia did not divine was the occupation of the woman within at that moment. Susan's sight of her passing figure earlier in the evening, not five minutes after the sick boy's exclamation, 'Mother, I do feel so bad!' persuaded the matron that an evil influence was certainly exercised by Eustacia's proximity.

On this account Susan did not go to bed as soon as the evening's work was over, as she would have done at ordinary times. To counteract the malign spell which she imagined poor Eustacia to be working, the boy's mother busied herself with a ghastly invention of superstition, calculated to bring powerlessness, atrophy, and annihilation on any human being against whom it was directed. It was a practice well known on Egdon at that date, and one that is not quite extinct at the present day.

She passed with her candle into an inner room, where, among other utensils, were two large brown pans, containing together perhaps a hundred-weight of liquid honey, the produce of the bees during the foregoing summer. On a shelf over the pans was a smooth and solid yellow mass of a hemispherical form, consisting of beeswax from the same take of honey. Susan took down the lump, and, cutting off several thin slices, heaped them in an iron ladle, with which she returned to the living-room, and placed the vessel in the hot ashes of the fireplace. As soon as the wax had softened to the plasticity of dough she kneaded the pieces together. And now her face became more intent. She began moulding the wax; and it was evident from her manner of manipulation that she was endeavouring to give it some pre-conceived form. The form was human.

By warming and kneading, cutting and twisting, dismembering and re-joining the incipient image she had in about a quarter of an hour produced a shape which tolerably well resembled a woman, and was about six inches high. She laid it on the table to get cold and hard. Meanwhile she took the candle and went upstairs to where the little boy was lying.

'Did you notice, my dear, what Eustacia wore this afternoon besides the dark dress?'

'A red ribbon round her neck.'

'Anything else?'

'No—except sandal-shoes.'

'A red ribbon and sandal-shoes,' she said to herself.

Mrs. Nunsuch went and searched till she found a fragment of the narrowest red ribbon, which she took downstairs and tied round the neck of the image. Then fetching ink and a quill from the rickety bureau by the window, she blackened the feet of the image to the extent presumably covered by shoes; and on the instep of each foot marked cross-lines in the shape taken by the sandal-strings of those days. Finally she tied a bit of black thread round the upper part of the head, in faint resemblance to a fillet worn for confining the hair.

Susan held the object at arm's length and contemplated it with a satisfaction in which there was no smile. To anybody acquainted with the inhabitants of Egdon Heath the image would have suggested Eustacia Yeobright.

From her work-basket in the window-seat the woman took a paper of pins, of the old long and yellow sort, whose heads were disposed to come off at their first usage. These she began to thrust into the image in all directions, with apparently excruciating energy. Probably as many as fifty were thus inserted, some into the head of the wax model, some into the shoulders, some into the trunk, some upwards through the soles of the feet, till the figure was completely permeated with pins.

She turned to the fire. It had been of turf; and though the high heap of ashes which turf fires produce was somewhat dark and dead on the outside, upon raking it abroad with the shovel the inside of the mass showed a glow of red heat. She took a few pieces of fresh turf from the chimney-corner and built them together over the glow, upon which the fire brightened. Seizing with the tongs the image that she had made of Eustacia, she held it in the heat, and watched it as it began to waste slowly away. And while she stood thus engaged there came from between her lips a murmur of words.

It was a strange jargon—the Lord's Prayer repeated backwards—the incantation usual in proceedings for obtaining unhallowed assistance against an enemy. Susan uttered the lugubrious discourse three times slowly, and when it was completed the image had considerably diminished. As the wax dropped into the fire a long flame arose from the spot, and curling its tongue round the figure ate still further into its substance. A pin occasionally dropped with the wax, and the embers heated it red as it lay.

VIII. RAIN, DARKNESS, AND ANXIOUS WANDERERS

WHILE the effigy of Eustacia was melting to nothing, and the fair woman herself was standing on Rainbarrow, her soul in an abyss of desolation seldom plumbed by one so young, Yeobright sat lonely at Blooms-End. He had fulfilled his word to Thomasin by sending off Fairway with the letter to his wife, and now waited with increased impatience for some sound or signal of her return. Were Eustacia still at Mistover the very least to be expected was that she would send him back a reply to-night by the same hand; though, to leave all to her inclination, he had cautioned Fairway not to ask for an answer. If one were told or handed to him he was to bring it immediately; if not, he was to go straight home without troubling to come round to Blooms-End again that night.

But secretly Clym had a more pleasing hope. Eustacia might possibly decline to use her pen—it was rather her way to work silently—and surprise him by appearing at his door.

To Clym's regret it began to rain and blow hard as the evening advanced.

The wind rasped and scraped at the corners of the house, and filliped the eavesdroppings like peas against the panes. He walked restlessly about the untenanted rooms, stopping strange noises in windows and doors by jamming splinters of wood into the casements and crevices, and pressing together the lead-work of the quarries where it had become loosened from the glass. It was one of those nights when cracks in the walls of old churches widen, when ancient stains on the ceilings of decayed manor-houses are renewed and enlarged from the size of a man's hand to an area of many feet. The little gate in the palings before his dwelling continually opened and clicked together again, but when he looked out eagerly nobody was there; it was as if invisible shapes of the dead were passing in on their way to visit him.

Between ten and eleven o'clock, finding that neither Fairway nor anybody else came to him, he retired to rest, and despite his anxieties soon fell asleep. His sleep, however, was not very sound, by reason of the expectancy he had given way to, and he was easily awakened by a knocking which began at the door about an hour after. Clym arose and looked out of the window. Rain was still falling heavily, the whole expanse of heath before him emitting a subdued hiss under the downpour. It was too dark to see anything at all.

'Who's there?' he cried.

Light footsteps shifted their position in the porch, and he could just distinguish in a plaintive female voice the words, 'O Clym, come down and let me in!'

He flushed hot with agitation. 'Surely it is Eustacia!' he murmured. If so, she had indeed come to him unawares.

He hastily got a light, dressed himself, and went down. On his flinging open the door the rays of the candle fell upon a woman closely wrapped up, who at once came forward.

'Thomasin!' he exclaimed in an indescribable tone of disappointment. 'It is Thomasin, and on such a night as this! O, where is Eustacia?'

Thomasin it was, wet, frightened, and panting.

'Eustacia? I don't know, Clym; but I can think,' she said with much perturbation. 'Let me come in and rest—I will explain this. There is a great trouble brewing—my husband and Eustacia!'

'What, what?'

'I think my husband is going to leave me or do something dreadful—I don't know what—Clym, will you go and see? I have nobody to help me but you! Eustacia has not come home?'

'No.'

She went on breathlessly: 'Then they are going to run off together! He came indoors to-night about eight o'clock and said in an off-hand way, "Tamsie, I have just found that I must go a journey." "When?" I said. "To-night," he said. "Where?" I asked him. "I cannot tell you at present," he said; "I shall be back again to-morrow." He then went and busied himself in looking up his things, and took no notice of me at all. I expected to see him start, but he did not, and then it came to be ten o'clock, when he said,

"You had better go to bed." I didn't know what to do, and I went to bed. I believe he thought I fell asleep, for half an hour after that he came up and unlocked the oak chest we keep money in when we have much in the house and took out a roll of something which I believe was bank-notes, though I was not aware that he had 'em there. These he must have got from the bank when he went there the other day. What does he want bank-notes for, if he is only going off for a day? When he had gone down I thought of Eustacia, and how he had met her the night before—I know he did meet her, Clym, for I followed him part of the way; but I did not like to tell you when you called, and so make you think ill of him, as I did not think it was so serious. Then I could not stay in bed; I got up and dressed myself, and when I heard him out in the stable I thought I would come and tell you. So I came downstairs without any noise and slipped out.'

'Then he was not absolutely gone when you left?'

'No. Will you, dear Cousin Clym, go and try to persuade him not to go? He takes no notice of what I say, and puts me off with the story of his going on a journey, and will be home to-morrow, and all that; but I don't believe it. I think you could influence him.'

'I'll go,' said Clym. 'O, Eustacia!'

Thomasin carried in her arms a large bundle; and having by this time seated herself she began to unroll it, when a baby appeared as the kernel to the husks—dry, warm, and unconscious of travel or rough weather. Thomasin briefly kissed the baby, and then found time to begin crying as she said, 'I brought baby, for I was afraid what might happen to her. I suppose it will be her death, but I couldn't leave her with Rachel!'

Clym hastily put together the logs on the hearth, raked abroad the embers, which were scarcely yet extinct, and blew up a flame with the bellows.

'Dry yourself,' he said. 'I'll go and get some more wood.'

'No, no—don't stay for that. I'll make up the fire. Will you go at once—please will you?'

Yeobright ran upstairs to finish dressing himself. While he was gone another rapping came to the door. This time there was no delusion that it might be Eustacia's: the footsteps just preceding it had been heavy and slow. Yeobright, thinking it might possibly be Fairway with a note in answer, descended again and opened the door.

'Captain Vye?' he said to a dripping figure.

'Is my grand-daughter here?' said the captain.

'No.'

'Then where is she?'

'I don't know.'

'But you ought to know—you are her husband.'

'Only in name apparently,' said Clym with rising excitement. 'I believe she means to elope to-night with Wildeve. I am just going to look to it.'

'Well, she has left my house; she left about half an hour ago. Who's sitting there?'

'My cousin Thomasin.'

The captain bowed in a preoccupied way to her. 'I only hope it is no worse than an elopement,' he said.

'Worse? What's worse than the worst a wife can do?'

'Well, I have been told a strange tale. Before starting in search of her I called up Charley, my stablelad. I missed my pistols the other day.'

'Pistols?'

'He said at the time that he took them down to clean. He has now owned that he took them because he saw Eustacia looking curiously at them; and she afterwards owned to him that she was thinking of taking her life, but bound him to secrecy, and promised never to think of such a thing again. I hardly suppose she will ever have bravado enough to use one of them; but it shows what has been lurking in her mind; and people who think of that sort of thing once think of it again.'

'Where are the pistols?'

'Safely locked up. O no, she won't touch them again. But there are more ways of letting out life than through a bullet-hole. What did you quarrel about so bitterly with her to drive her to all this? You must have treated her badly indeed. Well, I was always against the marriage, and I was right.'

'Are you going with me?' said Yeobright, paying no attention to the captain's latter remark. 'If so, I can tell you what we quarrelled about as we walk along.'

'Where to?'

'To Wildeve's—that was her destination, depend upon it.'

Thomasin here broke in, still weeping: 'He said he was only going on a sudden short journey; but if so why did he want so much money? O, Clym, what do you think will happen? I am afraid that you, my poor baby, will soon have no father left to you!'

'I am off now,' said Yeobright, stepping into the porch.

'I would fain go with ye,' said the old man doubtfully. 'But I begin to be afraid that my legs will hardly carry me there such a night as this. I am not so young as I was. If they are interrupted in their flight she will be sure to come back to me, and I ought to be at the house to receive her. But be it as 'twill I can't walk to the Quiet Woman, and that's an end on't. I'll go straight home.'

'It will perhaps be best,' said Clym. 'Thomasin, dry yourself, and be as comfortable as you can.'

With this he closed the door upon her, and left the house in company with Captain Vye, who parted from him outside the gate, taking the middle path, which led to Mistover. Clym crossed by the right-hand track towards the inn.

Thomasin, being left alone, took off some of her wet garments, carried the baby upstairs to Clym's bed, and then came down to the sitting-room again, where she made a larger fire, and began drying herself. The fire soon flared up the chimney, giving the room an appearance of comfort that was doubled by contrast with the drumming of the storm without, which snapped at the

window-panes and breathed into the chimney strange low utterances that seemed to be the prologue to some tragedy.

But the least part of Thomasin was in the house, for her heart being at ease about the little girl upstairs she was mentally following Clym on his journey. Having indulged in this imaginary peregrination for some considerable interval, she became impressed with a sense of the intolerable slowness of time. But she sat on. The moment then came when she could scarcely sit longer; and it was like a satire on her patience to remember that Clym could hardly have reached the inn as yet. At last she went to the baby's bedside. The child was sleeping soundly; but her imagination of possibly disastrous events at her home, the predominance within her of the unseen over the seen, agitated her beyond endurance. She could not refrain from going down and opening the door. The rain still continued, the candlelight falling upon the nearest drops and making glistening darts of them as they descended across the throng of invisible ones behind. To plunge into that medium was to plunge into water slightly diluted with air. But the difficulty of returning to her house at this moment made her all the more desirous of doing so: anything was better than suspense. 'I have come here well enough,' she said, 'and why shouldn't I go back again? It is a mistake for me to be away.'

She hastily fetched the infant, wrapped it up, cloaked herself as before, and shovelling the ashes over the fire, to prevent accidents, went into the open air. Pausing first to put the door-key in its old place behind the shutter, she resolutely turned her face to the confronting pile of firmamental darkness beyond the palings, and stepped into its midst. But Thomasin's imagination being so actively engaged elsewhere, the night and the weather had for her no terror beyond that of their actual discomfort and difficulty.

She was soon ascending Blooms-End valley and traversing the undulations on the side of the hill. The noise of the wind over the heath was shrill, and as if it whistled for joy at finding a night so congenial as this. Sometimes the path led her to hollows between thickets of tall and dripping bracken, dead, though not yet prostrate, which enclosed her like a pool. When they were more than usually tall she lifted the baby to the top of her head, that it might be out of reach of their drenching fronds. On higher ground, where the wind was brisk and sustained, the rain flew in a level flight without sensible descent, so that it was beyond all power to imagine the remoteness of the point at which it left the bosoms of the clouds. Here self-defence was impossible, and individual drops stuck into her like the arrows into Saint Sebastian. She was enabled to avoid puddles by the nebulous paleness which signified their presence, though beside anything less dark than the heath they themselves would have appeared as blackness.

Yet in spite of all this Thomasin was not sorry that she had started. To her there were not, as to Eustacia, demons in the air, and malice in every bush and bough. The drops which lashed her face were not scorpions, but prosy rain; Egdon in the mass was no monster whatever, but impersonal open ground. Her fears of the place were rational, her dislikes of its worst moods

reasonable. At this time it was in her view a windy, wet place, in which a person might experience much discomfort, lose the path without care, and possibly catch cold.

If the path is well known the difficulty at such times of keeping therein is not altogether great, from its familiar feel to the feet; but once lost it is irrecoverable. Owing to her baby, who somewhat impeded Thomasin's view forward and distracted her mind, she did at last lose the track. This mishap occurred when she was descending an open slope about two-thirds home. Instead of attempting, by wandering hither and thither, the hopeless task of finding such a more thread, she went straight on, trusting for guidance to her general knowledge of the district, which was scarcely surpassed by Clym's or by that of the heathcroppers themselves.

At length Thomasin reached a hollow and began to discern through the rain a faint blotted radiance, which presently assumed the oblong form of an open door. She knew that no house stood hereabouts, and was soon aware of the nature of the door by its height above the ground.

'Why, it is Diggory Venn's van, surely!' she said.

A certain secluded spot near Rainbarrow was, she knew, often Venn's chosen centre when staying in this neighbourhood; and she guessed at once that she had stumbled upon this mysterious retreat. The question arose in her mind whether or not she should ask him to guide her into the path. In her anxiety to reach home she decided that she would appeal to him, notwithstanding the strangeness of appearing before his eyes at this place and season. But when, in pursuance of this resolve, Thomasin reached the van and looked in she found it to be untenanted; though there was no doubt that it was the reddleman's. The fire was burning in the stove, the lantern hung from the nail. Round the doorway the floor was merely sprinkled with rain, and not saturated, which told her that the door had not long been opened.

While she stood uncertainly looking in Thomasin heard a footstep advancing from the darkness behind her; and turning, beheld the well-known form in corduroy, lurid from head to foot, the lantern beams falling upon him through an intervening gauze of raindrops.

'I thought you went down the slope,' he said, without noticing her face. 'How do you come back here again?'

'Diggory?' said Thomasin faintly.

'Who are you?' said Venn, still unperceiving. 'And why were you crying so just now?'

'O, Diggory! don't you know me?' said she. 'But of course you don't, wrapped up like this. What do you mean? I have not been crying here, and I have not been here before.'

Venn then came nearer till he could see the illuminated side of her form.

'Mrs. Wildeve!' he exclaimed starting. 'What a time for us to meet! And the baby too! What dreadful thing can have brought you out on such a night as this?'

She could not immediately answer; and without asking her permission he hopped into his van, took her by the arm, and drew her up after him.

'What is it?' he continued when they stood within.

'I have lost my way coming from Blooms-End, and I am in a great hurry to get home. Please show me as quickly as you can! It is so silly of me not to know Egdon better, and I cannot think how I came to lose the path. Show me quickly, Diggory, please.'

'Yes, of course. I will go with ye. But you came to me before this, Mrs. Wildeve?'

'I only came this minute.'

'That's strange. I was lying down here asleep about five minutes ago, with the door shut to keep out the weather, when the brushing of a woman's clothes over the heath-bushes just outside woke me up (for I don't sleep heavy), and at the same time I heard a sobbing or crying from the same woman. I opened my door and held out my lantern, and just as far as the light would reach I saw a woman: she turned her head when the light sheened on her, and then hurried on downhill. I hung up the lantern, and was curious enough to pull on my things and dog her a few steps, but I could see nothing of her any more. That was where I had been when you came up; and when I saw you I thought you were the same one.'

'Perhaps it was one of the heath-folk going home?'

'No, it couldn't. 'Tis too late. The noise of her gown over the heath was of a whistling sort that nothing but silk will make.'

'It wasn't I, then. My dress is not silk, you see. . . . Are we anywhere in a line between Mistover and the inn?'

'Well, yes; not far out.'

'Ah, I wonder if it was she! Diggory, I must go at once!'

She jumped down from the van before he was aware, when Venn unhooked the lantern and leaped down after her. 'I'll take the baby, ma'am,' he said. 'You must be tired out by the weight.'

Thomasin hesitated a moment, and then delivered the baby into Venn's hands. 'Don't squeeze her, Diggory,' she said, 'or hurt her little arm; and keep the cloak close over her like this, so that the rain may not drop in her face.'

'I will,' said Venn earnestly. 'As if I could hurt anything belonging to you!'

'I only meant accidentally,' said Thomasin.

'The baby is dry enough, but you are pretty wet,' said the reddleman when, in closing the door of his cart to padlock it, he noticed on the floor a ring of water-drops where her cloak had hung from her.

Thomasin followed him as he wound right and left to avoid the larger bushes, stopping occasionally and covering the lantern, while he looked over his shoulder to gain some idea of the position of Rainbarrow above them, which it was necessary to keep directly behind their backs to preserve a proper course.

'You are sure the rain does not fall upon baby?'

'Quite sure. May I ask how old he is, ma'am?'

'He!' said Thomasin reproachfully. 'Anybody can see better than that in a moment. She is nearly two months old. How far is it now to the inn?'

'A little over a quarter of a mile.'

'Will you walk a little faster?'

'I was afraid you could not keep up.'

'I am very anxious to get there. Ah, there is a light from the window!'

'Tis not from the window. That's a gig-lamp, to the best of my belief.'

'O!' said Thomasin in despair. 'I wish I had been there sooner—give me the baby, Diggory—you can go back now.'

'I must go all the way,' said Venn. 'There is a quag between us and that light, and you will walk into it up to your neck unless I take you round.'

'But the light is at the inn, and there is no quag in front of that.'

'No, the light is below the inn some two or three hundred yards.'

'Never mind,' said Thomasin hurriedly. 'Go towards the light, and not towards the inn.'

'Yes,' answered Venn, swerving round in obedience; and, after a pause, 'I wish you would tell me what this great trouble is. I think you have proved that I can be trusted.'

'There are some things that cannot be—cannot be told to——' And then her heart rose into her throat, and she could say no more.

IX. SIGHTS AND SOUNDS DRAW THE WANDERERS TOGETHER

HAVING seen Eustacia's signal from the hill at eight o'clock, Wildevé immediately prepared to assist her in her flight, and, as he hoped, accompany her. He was somewhat perturbed, and his manner of informing Thomasin that he was going on a journey was in itself sufficient to rouse her suspicions. When she had gone to bed he collected the few articles he would require, and went upstairs to the money-chest, whence he took a tolerably bountiful sum in notes, which had been advanced to him on the property he was so soon to have in possession, to defray expenses incidental to the removal.

He then went to the stable and coach-house to assure himself that the horse, gig, and harness were in a fit condition for a long drive. Nearly half an hour was spent thus, and on returning to the house Wildevé had no thought of Thomasin being anywhere but in bed. He had told the stable-lad not to stay up, leading the boy to understand that his departure would be at three or four in the morning; for this, though an exceptional hour, was less strange than midnight, the time actually agreed on, the packet from Budmouth sailing between one and two.

At last all was quiet, and he had nothing to do but to wait. By no effort

could he shake off the oppression of spirits which he had experienced ever since his last meeting with Eustacia, but he hoped there was that in his situation which money could cure. He had persuaded himself that to act not ungenerously towards his gentle wife by settling on her the half of his property, and with chivalrous devotion towards another and greater woman by sharing her fate, was possible. And though he meant to adhere to Eustacia's instructions to the letter, to deposit her where she wished and to leave her, should that be her will, the spell that she had cast over him intensified, and his heart was beating fast in the anticipated futility of such commands in the face of a mutual wish that they should depart together.

He would not allow himself to dwell long upon these conjectures, maxims, and hopes, and at twenty minutes to twelve he again went softly to the stable, harnessed the horse, and lit the lamps; whence, taking the horse by the head, he led him with the covered car out of the yard to a spot by the roadside some quarter of a mile below the inn.

Here Wildeve waited, slightly sheltered from the driving rain by a high bank that had been cast up at this place. Along the surface of the road where lit by the lamps the loosened gravel and small stones scudded and clicked together before the wind, which, leaving them in heaps, plunged into the heath and boomed across the bushes into darkness. Only one sound rose above this din of weather, and that was the roaring of a ten-hatch weir a few yards further on, where the road approached the river which formed the boundary of the heath in this direction.

He lingered on in perfect stillness till he began to fancy that the midnight hour must have struck. A very strong doubt had arisen in his mind if Eustacia would venture down the hill in such weather; yet knowing her nature he felt that she might. 'Poor thing! 'tis like her ill-luck,' he murmured.

At length he turned to the lamp and looked at his watch. To his surprise it was nearly a quarter past midnight. He now wished that he had driven up the circuitous road to Mistover, a plan not adopted because of the enormous length of the route in proportion to that of the pedestrian's path down the open hillside, and the consequent increase of labour for the horse.

At this moment a footstep approached; but the light of the lamps being in a different direction the comer was not visible. The step paused, then came on again.

'Eustacia?' said Wildeve.

The person came forward, and the light fell upon the form of Clym, glistening with wet, whom Wildeve immediately recognized; but Wildeve, who stood behind the lamp, was not at once recognized by Yeobright.

He stopped as if in doubt whether this waiting vehicle could have anything to do with the flight of his wife or not. The sight of Yeobright at once banished Wildeve's sober feelings, who saw him again as the deadly rival from whom Eustacia was to be kept at all hazards. Hence Wildeve did not speak, in the hope that Clym would pass by without particular inquiry.

While they both hung thus in hesitation a dull sound became audible above

the storm and wind. Its origin was unmistakable—it was the fall of a body into the stream adjoining, apparently at a point near the weir.

Both started. 'Good God! can it be she?' said Clym.

'Why should it be she?' said Wildevé, in his alarm forgetting that he had hitherto screened himself.

'Ah!—that's you, you traitor, is it?' cried Yeobright. 'Why should it be she? Because last week she would have put an end to her life if she had been able. She ought to have been watched! Take one of the lamps and come with me.'

Yeobright seized the one on his side and hastened on; Wildevé did not wait to unfasten the other, but followed at once along the meadow-track to the weir, a little in the rear of Clym.

Shadwater Weir had at its foot a large circular pool, fifty feet in diameter, into which the water flowed through ten huge hatches, raised and lowered by a winch and cogs in the ordinary manner. The sides of the pool were of masonry, to prevent the water from washing away the bank; but the force of the stream in winter was sometimes such as to undermine the retaining wall and precipitate it into the hole. Clym reached the hatches, the framework of which was shaken to its foundations by the velocity of the current. Nothing but the froth of the waves could be discerned in the pool below. He got upon the plank bridge over the race, and holding to the rail, that the wind might not blow him off, crossed to the other side of the river. There he leant over the wall and lowered the lamp, only to behold the vortex formed at the curl of the returning current.

Wildevé meanwhile had arrived on the former side, and the light from Yeobright's lamp shed a flecked and agitated radiance across the weir-pool, revealing to the ex-engineer the tumbling courses of the currents from the hatches above. Across this gashed and puckered mirror a dark body was slowly borne by one of the backward currents.

'O, my darling!' exclaimed Wildevé in an agonized voice; and, without showing sufficient presence of mind even to throw off his great-coat, he leaped into the boiling hole.

Yeobright could now also discern the floating body, though but indistinctly; and imagining from Wildevé's plunge that there was life to be saved he was about to leap after. Bethinking himself of a wiser plan he placed the lamp against a post to make it stand upright, and running round to the lower part of the pool, where there was no wall, he sprang in and boldly waded upwards towards the deeper portion. Here he was taken off his legs, and in swimming was carried round into the centre of the basin, where he perceived Wildevé struggling.

While these hasty actions were in progress here, Venn and Thomasin had been toiling through the lower corner of the heath in the direction of the light. They had not been near enough to the river to hear the plunge, but they saw the removal of the carriage-lamp, and watched its motion into the mead. As soon as they reached the car and horse Venn guessed that some-

thing new was amiss, and hastened to follow in the course of the moving light. Venn walked faster than Thomasin, and came to the weir alone.

The lamp placed against the post by Clym still shone across the water, and the reddleman observed something floating motionless. Being encumbered with the infant he ran back to meet Thomasin.

'Take the baby, please, Mrs. Wildeve,' he said hastily. 'Run home with her, call the stable-lad, and make him send down to me any men who may be living near. Somebody has fallen into the weir.'

Thomasin took the child and ran. When she came to the covered car the horse, though fresh from the stable, was standing perfectly still, as if conscious of misfortune. She saw for the first time whose it was. She nearly fainted, and would have been unable to proceed another step but that the necessity of preserving the little girl from harm nerved her to an amazing self-control. In this agony of suspense she entered the house, put the baby in a place of safety, woke the lad and the female domestic, and ran out to give the alarm at the nearest cottage.

Diggory, having returned to the brink of the pool, observed that the small upper hatches or floats were withdrawn. He found one of these lying upon the grass, and taking it under one arm, and with his lantern in his hand, entered at the bottom of the pool as Clym had done. As soon as he began to be in deep water he flung himself across the hatch; thus supported he was able to keep afloat as long as he chose, holding the lantern aloft with his disengaged hand. Propelled by his feet he steered round and round the pool, ascending each time by one of the back streams and descending in the middle of the current.

At first he could see nothing. Then amidst the glistening of the whirlpools and the white clots of foam he distinguished a woman's bonnet floating alone. His search was now under the left wall, when something came to the surface almost close beside him. It was not, as he had expected, a woman, but a man. The reddleman put the ring of the lantern between his teeth, seized the floating man by the collar, and, holding on to the hatch with his remaining arm, struck out into the strongest race, by which the unconscious man, the hatch, and himself were carried down the stream. As soon as Venn found his feet dragging over the pebbles of the shallower part below he secured his footing and waded towards the brink. There, where the water stood at about the height of his waist, he flung away the hatch, and attempted to drag forth the man. This was a matter of great difficulty, and he found as the reason that the legs of the unfortunate stranger were tightly embraced by the arms of another man, who had hitherto been entirely beneath the surface.

At this moment his heart bounded to hear footsteps running towards him, and two men, roused by Thomasin, appeared at the brink above. They ran to where Venn was, and helped him in lifting out the apparently drowned persons, separating them, and laying them out upon the grass. Venn turned the light upon their faces. The one who had been uppermost was Yeobright; he who had been completely submerged was Wildeve.

'Now we must search the hole again,' said Venn. 'A woman is in there somewhere. Get a pole.'

One of the men went to the foot-bridge and tore off the handrail. The reddleman and the two others then entered the water together from below as before, and with their united force probed the pool forwards to where it sloped down to its central depth. Venn was not mistaken in supposing that any person who had sunk for the last time would be washed down to this point, for when they had examined to about half-way across something impeded their thrust.

'Pull it forward,' said Venn, and they raked it in with the pole till it was close to their feet.

Venn vanished under the stream, and came up with an armful of wet drapery enclosing a woman's cold form, which was all that remained of the desperate Eustacia.

When they reached the bank there stood Thomasin, in a stress of grief, bending over the two unconscious ones who already lay there. The horse and car were brought to the nearest point in the road, and it was the work of a few minutes only to place the three in the vehicle. Venn led on the horse, supporting Thomasin upon his arm, and the two men followed, till they reached the inn.

The woman who had been shaken out of her sleep by Thomasin had hastily dressed herself and lighted a fire, the other servant being left to snore on in peace at the back of the house. The insensible forms of Eustacia, Clym, and Wildeva were then brought in and laid on the carpet, with their feet to the fire, when such restorative processes as could be thought of were adopted at once, the stableman being in the meantime sent for a doctor. But there seemed to be not a whiff of life left in either of the bodies. Then Thomasin, whose stupor of grief had been thrust off awhile by frantic action, applied a bottle of hartshorn to Clym's nostrils, having tried in vain upon the other two. He sighed.

'Clym's alive!' she exclaimed.

He soon breathed distinctly, and again and again did she attempt to revive her husband by the same means; but Wildeva gave no sign. There was too much reason to think that he and Eustacia both were for ever beyond the reach of stimulating perfumes. Their exertions did not relax till the doctor arrived, when, one by one, the senseless three were taken upstairs and put into warm beds.

Venn soon felt himself relieved from further attendance, and went to the door, scarcely able yet to realize the strange catastrophe that had befallen the family in which he took so great an interest. Thomasin surely would be broken down by the sudden and overwhelming nature of this event. No firm and sensible Mrs. Yeobright lived now to support the gentle girl through the ordeal; and, whatever an unimpassioned spectator might think of her loss of such a husband as Wildeva, there could be no doubt that for the moment she was distracted and horrified by the blow. As for himself, not being privileged

to go to her and comfort her, he saw no reason for waiting longer in a house where he remained only as a stranger.

He returned across the heath to his van. The fire was not yet out, and everything remained as he had left it. Venn now bethought himself of his clothes, which were saturated with water to the weight of lead. He changed them, spread them before the fire, and lay down to sleep. But it was more than he could do to rest here while excited by a vivid imagination of the turmoil they were in at the house he had quitted, and, blaming himself for coming away, he dressed in another suit, locked up the door, and again hastened across to the inn. Rain was still falling heavily when he entered the kitchen. A bright fire was shining from the hearth, and two women were bustling about, one of whom was Olly Dowden.

'Well, how is it going on now?' said Venn in a whisper.

'Mr. Yeobright is better; but Mrs. Yeobright and Mr. Wildeve are dead and cold. The doctor says they were quite gone before they were out of the water.'

'Ah! I thought as much when I hauled 'em up. And Mrs. Wildeve?'

'She is as well as can be expected. The doctor had her put between blankets, for she was almost as wet as they that had been in the river, poor young thing. You don't seem very dry, reddleman.'

'O, 'tis not much. I have changed my things. This is only a little dampness I've got coming through the rain again.'

'Stand by the fire. Mis'ess says you be to have whatever you want, and she was sorry when she was told that you'd gone away.'

Venn drew near to the fireplace, and looked into the flames in an absent mood. The steam came from his leggings and ascended the chimney with the smoke, while he thought of those who were upstairs. Two were corpses, one had barely escaped the jaws of death, another was sick and a widow. The last occasion on which he had lingered by that fireplace was when the raffle was in progress; when Wildeve was alive and well; Thomasin active and smiling in the next room; Yeobright and Eustacia just made husband and wife, and Mrs. Yeobright living at Blooms-End. It had seemed at that time that the then position of affairs was good for at least twenty years to come. Yet, of all the circle, he himself was the only one whose situation had not materially changed.

While he ruminated a footstep descended the stairs. It was the nurse, who brought in her hand a rolled mass of wet paper. The woman was so engrossed with her occupation that she hardly saw Venn. She took from the cupboard some pieces of twine, while she strained across the fireplace, tying the end of each piece to the firedog, previously pulled forward for the purpose, and, unrolling the wet papers, she began pinning them one by one to the strings in a manner of clothes on a line.

'What be they?' said Venn.

'Poor master's bank-notes,' she answered. 'They were found in his pocket when they undressed him.'

'Then he was not coming back again for some time?' said Venn.

'That we shall never know,' said she.

Venn was loth to depart, for all on earth that interested him lay under this roof. As nobody in the house had any more sleep that night, except the two who slept for ever, there was no reason why he should not remain. So he retired into the niche of the fireplace where he had used to sit, and there he continued, watching the steam from the double row of bank-notes as they waved backwards and forwards in the draught of the chimney till their flaccidity was changed to dry crispness throughout. Then the woman came and unpinned them, and, folding them together, carried the handful upstairs. Presently the doctor appeared from above with the look of a man who could do no more, and, pulling on his gloves, went out of the house, the trotting of his horse soon dying away upon the road.

At four o'clock there was a gentle knock at the door. It was from Charley, who had been sent by Captain Vye to inquire if anything had been heard of Eustacia. The girl who admitted him looked in his face as if she did not know what answer to return, and showed him in to where Venn was seated, saying to the reddleman, 'Will you tell him, please?'

Venn told. Charley's only utterance was a feeble, indistinct sound. He stood quite still; then he burst out spasmodically, 'I shall see her once more.'

'I dare say you may see her,' said Diggory gravely. 'But hadn't you better run and tell Captain Vye?'

'Yes, yes. Only I do hope I shall see her just once again.'

'You shall,' said a low voice behind; and starting round they beheld by the dim light a thin, pallid, almost spectral form, wrapped in a blanket, and looking like Lazarus coming from the tomb.

It was Yeobright. Neither Venn nor Charley spoke, and Clym continued: 'You shall see her. There will be time enough to tell the captain when it gets daylight. You would like to see her too—would you not, Diggory? She looks very beautiful now.'

Venn assented by rising to his feet, and with Charley he followed Clym to the foot of the staircase, where he took off his boots; Charley did the same. They followed Yeobright upstairs to the landing, where there was a candle burning, which Yeobright took in his hand, and with it led the way into an adjoining room. Here he went to the bedside and folded back the sheet.

They stood silently looking upon Eustacia, who, as she lay there still in death, eclipsed all her living phases. Pallor did not include all the quality of her complexion, which seemed more than whiteness; it was almost light. The expression of her finely carved mouth was pleasant, as if a sense of dignity had just compelled her to leave off speaking. Eternal rigidity had seized upon it in a momentary transition between fervour and resignation. Her black hair was looser now than either of them had ever seen it before, and surrounded her brow like a forest. The stateliness of look which had been almost too marked for a dweller in a country domicile had at last found an artistically happy background.

Nobody spoke, till at length Clym covered her and turned aside. 'Now come here,' he said.

They went to a recess in the same room, and there, on a smaller bed, lay another figure—Wildev. Less repose was visible in his face than in Eustacia's, but the same luminous youthfulness overspread it, and the least sympathetic observer would have felt at sight of him now that he was born for a higher destiny than this. The only sign upon him of his recent struggle for life was in his finger-tips, which were worn and scarified in his dying endeavours to obtain a hold on the face of the weir-wall.

Yeobright's manner had been so quiet, he had uttered so few syllables since his reappearance, that Venn imagined him resigned. It was only when they had left the room and stood upon the landing that the true state of his mind was apparent. Here he said, with a wild smile, inclining his head towards the chamber in which Eustacia lay, 'She is the second woman I have killed this year. I was a great cause of my mother's death; and I am the chief cause of hers.'

'How?' said Venn.

'I spoke cruel words to her, and she left my house. I did not invite her back till it was too late. It is I who ought to have drowned myself. It would have been a charity to the living had the river overwhelmed me and borne her up. But I cannot die. Those who ought to have lived lie dead; and here am I alive!'

'But you can't charge yourself with crimes in that way,' said Venn. 'You may as well say that the parents be the cause of a murder by the child, for without the parents the child would never have been begot.'

'Yes, Venn, that is very true; but you don't know all the circumstances. If it had pleased God to put an end to me it would have been a good thing for all. But I am getting used to the horror of my existence. They say that a time comes when men laugh at misery through long acquaintance with it. Surely that time will soon come to me!'

'Your aim has always been good,' said Venn. 'Why should you say such desperate things?'

'No, they are not desperate. They are only hopeless; and my great regret is that for what I have done no man or law can punish me!'

BOOK SIX: *AFTERCOURSES*

I. THE INEVITABLE MOVEMENT ONWARD

THE story of the deaths of Eustacia and Wildeve was told throughout Egdon, and far beyond, for many weeks and months. All the known incidents of their love were enlarged, distorted, touched up, and modified, till the original reality bore but a slight resemblance to the counterfeit presentation by surrounding tongues. Yet, upon the whole, neither the man nor the woman lost dignity by sudden death. Misfortune had struck them gracefully, cutting off their erratic histories with a catastrophic dash, instead of, as with many, attenuating each life to an uninteresting meagreness, through long years of wrinkles, neglect, and decay.

On those most nearly concerned the effect was somewhat different. Strangers who had heard of many such cases now merely heard of one more; but immediately where a blow falls no previous imaginings amount to appreciable preparation for it. The very suddenness of her bereavement dulled, to some extent, Thomasin's feelings; yet, irrationally enough, a consciousness that the husband she had lost ought to have been a better man did not lessen her mourning at all. On the contrary, this fact seemed at first to set off the dead husband in his young wife's eyes, and to be the necessary cloud to the rainbow.

But the horrors of the unknown had passed. Vague misgivings about her future as a deserted wife were at an end. The worst had once been matter of trembling conjecture; it was now matter of reason only, a limited badness. Her chief interest, the little Eustacia, still remained. There was humility in her grief, no defiance in her attitude; and when this is the case a shaken spirit is apt to be stilled.

Could Thomasin's mournfulness now and Eustacia's serenity during life have been reduced to common measures, they would have touched the same mark nearly. But Thomasin's former brightness made shadow of that which in a sombre atmosphere was light itself.

The spring came and calmed her; the summer came and soothed her; the autumn arrived, and she began to be comforted, for her little girl was strong and happy, growing in size and knowledge every day. Outward events flattered Thomasin not a little. Wildeve had died intestate, and she and the child were his only relatives. When administration had been granted, all the debts paid, and the residue of her husband's uncle's property had come into her hands, it was found that the sum waiting to be invested for her own and the child's benefit was little less than ten thousand pounds.

Where should she live? The obvious place was Blooms-End. The old rooms, it is true, were not much higher than the between-decks of a frigate,

necessitating a sinking in the floor under the new clock-case she brought from the inn, and the removal of the handsome brass knobs on its head, before there was height for it to stand; but, such as the rooms were, there were plenty of them, and the place was endeared to her by every early recollection. Clym very gladly admitted her as a tenant, confining his own existence to two rooms at the top of the back staircase, where he lived on quietly, shut off from Thomasin and the three servants she had thought fit to indulge in now that she was a mistress of money, going his own ways, and thinking his own thoughts.

His sorrows had made some change in his outward appearance; and yet the alteration was chiefly within. It might have been said that he had a wrinkled mind. He had no enemies, and he could get nobody to reproach him, which was why he so bitterly reproached himself.

He did sometimes think he had been ill-used by fortune, so far as to say that to be born is a palpable dilemma, and that instead of men aiming to advance in life with glory they should calculate how to retreat out of it without shame. But that he and his had been sarcastically and pitilessly handled in having such irons thrust into their souls he did not maintain long. It is usually so, except with the sternest of men. Human beings, in their generous endeavour to construct a hypothesis that shall not degrade a First Cause, have always hesitated to conceive a dominant power of lower moral quality than their own; and, even while they sit down and weep by the waters of Babylon, invent excuses for the oppression which prompts their tears.

Thus, though words of solace were vainly uttered in his presence, he found relief in a direction of his own choosing when left to himself. For a man of his habits the house and the hundred and twenty pounds a year which he had inherited from his mother were enough to supply all worldly needs. Resources do not depend upon gross amounts, but upon the proportion of givings to takings.

He frequently walked the heath alone, when the past seized upon him with its shadowy hand, and held him there to listen to its tale. His imagination would then people the spot with its ancient inhabitants: forgotten Celtic tribes trod their tracks about him, and he could almost live among them, look in their faces, and see them standing beside the barrows which swelled around, untouched and perfect as at the time of their erection. Those of the dyed barbarians who had chosen the cultivable tracts were, in comparison with those who had left their marks here, as writers on paper beside writers on parchment. Their records had perished long ago by the plough, while the works of these remained. Yet they all had lived and died unconscious of the different fates awaiting their works. It reminded him that unforeseen factors operate in the production of immortality.

Winter again came round, with its winds, frosts, tame robins, and sparkling starlight. The year previous Thomasin had hardly been conscious of the season's advance; this year she laid her heart open to external influences of every kind. The life of this sweet cousin, her baby, and her servants, came

to Clym's senses only in the form of sounds through a wood partition as he sat over books of exceptionally large type; but his ear became at last so accustomed to these slight noises from the other part of the house that he almost could witness the scenes they signified. A faint beat of half-seconds conjured up Thomasin rocking the cradle, a wavering hum meant that she was singing the baby to sleep, a crunching of sand as between millstones raised the picture of Humphrey's, Fairway's, or Sam's heavy feet crossing the stone floor of the kitchen; a light boyish step, and a gay tune in a high key, betokened a visit from Grandfer Cantele; a sudden break-off in the Grandfer's utterances implied the application to his lips of a mug of small beer; a bustling and slamming of doors meant starting to go to market; for Thomasin, in spite of her added scope for gentility, led a ludicrously narrow life, to the end that she might save every possible pound for her little daughter.

One summer day Clym was in the garden, immediately outside the parlour-window, which was as usual open. He was looking at the pot-flowers on the sill; they had been revived and restored by Thomasin to the state in which his mother had left them. He heard a slight scream from Thomasin, who was sitting inside the room.

'O, how you frightened me!' she said to some one who had entered. 'I thought you were the ghost of yourself.'

Clym was curious enough to advance a little further and look in at the window. To his astonishment there stood within the room Diggory Venn, no longer a reddleman, but exhibiting the strangely altered hues of an ordinary Christian countenance, white shirt-front, light flowered waistcoat, blue-spotted neckerchief, and bottle-green coat. Nothing in his appearance was at all singular but the fact of its great difference from what he had formerly been. Red, and all approach to red, was carefully excluded from every article of clothes upon him; for what is there that persons just out of harness dread so much as reminders of the trade which has enriched them?

Yeobright went round to the door and entered.

'I was so alarmed!' said Thomasin, smiling from one to the other. 'I couldn't believe that he had got white of his own accord! It seemed supernatural.'

'I gave up dealing in redde last Christmas,' said Venn. 'It was a profitable trade, and I found that by that time I had made enough to take the dairy of fifty cows that my father had in his lifetime. I always thought of getting to that place again if I changed at all; and now I am there.'

'How did you manage to become white, Diggory?' Thomasin asked.

'I turned so by degrees, ma'am.'

'You look much better than ever you did before.'

Venn appeared confused; and Thomasin, seeing how inadvertently she had spoken to a man who might possibly have tender feelings for her still, blushed a little. Clym saw nothing of this, and added goodhumouredly—

'What shall we have to frighten Thomasin's baby with, now that you have become a human being again?'

'Sit down, Diggory,' said Thomasin, 'and stay to tea.'

Venn moved as if he would retire to the kitchen, when Thomasin said with pleasant pertness as she went on with some sewing, 'Of course you must sit down here. And where does your fifty-cow dairy lie, Mr. Venn?'

'At Stickleford—about two miles to the right of Alderworth, ma'am, where the meads begin. I have thought that if Mr. Yeobright would like to pay me a visit sometimes he shouldn't stay away for want of asking. I'll not bide to tea this afternoon, thank'ee, for I've got something on hand that must be settled. 'Tis Maypole-day to-morrow, and the Shadwater folk have clubbed with a few of your neighbours here to have a pole just outside your palings in the heath, as it is a nice green place.' Venn waved his elbow towards the patch in front of the house. 'I have been talking to Fairway about it,' he continued, 'and I said to him that before we put up the pole it would be well to ask Mrs. Wildev.'e.'

'I can say nothing against it,' she answered. 'Our property does not reach an inch further than the white palings.'

'But you might not like to see a lot of folk going crazy round a stick, under your very nose?'

'I shall have no objection at all.'

Venn soon after went away, and in the evening Yeobright strolled as far as Fairway's cottage. It was a lovely May sunset, and the birch trees which grew on this margin of the vast Egdon wilderness had put on their new leaves, delicate as butterflies' wings, and diaphanous as amber. Beside Fairway's dwelling was an open space recessed from the road, and here were now collected all the young people from within a radius of a couple of miles. The pole lay with one end supported on a trestle, and women were engaged in wreathing it from the top downwards with wild-flowers. The instincts of merry England lingered on here with exceptional vitality, and the symbolic customs which tradition has attached to each season of the year were yet a reality on Egdon. Indeed, the impulses of all such outlandish hamlets are pagan still: in these spots homage to nature, self-adoration, frantic gaities, fragments of Teutonic rites to divinities whose names are forgotten, seem in some way or other to have survived mediæval doctrine.

Yeobright did not interrupt the preparations, and went home again. The next morning, when Thomasin withdrew the curtains of her bedroom window, there stood the Maypole in the middle of the green, its top cutting into the sky. It had sprung up in the night, or rather early morning, like Jack's bean-stalk. She opened the casement to get a better view of the garlands and posies that adorned it. The sweet perfume of the flowers had already spread into the surrounding air, which, being free from every taint, conducted to her lips a full measure of the fragrance received from the spire of blossom in its midst. At the top of the pole were crossed hoops decked with small flowers; beneath these came a milk-white zone of Maybloom; then a zone of bluebells, then of cowslips, then of lilacs, then of ragged-robins, daffodils, and so on, till

the lowest stage was reached. Thomasin noticed all these, and was delighted that the May-revel was to be so near.

When afternoon came people began to gather on the green, and Yeobright was interested enough to look out upon them from the open window of his room. Soon after this Thomasin walked out from the door immediately below and turned her eyes up to her cousin's face. She was dressed more gaily than Yeobright had ever seen her dress since the time of Wildeve's death, eighteen months before; since the day of her marriage even she had not exhibited herself to such advantage.

'How pretty you look to-day, Thomasin!' he said. 'Is it because of the Maypole?'

'Not altogether.' And then she blushed and dropped her eyes, which he did not specially observe, though her manner seemed to him to be rather peculiar, considering that she was only addressing himself. Could it be possible that she had put on her summer clothes to please him?

He recalled her conduct towards him throughout the last few weeks, when they had often been working together in the garden, just as they had formerly done when they were boy and girl under his mother's eye. What if her interest in him were not so entirely that of a relative as it had formerly been? To Yeobright any possibility of this sort was a serious matter; and he almost felt troubled at the thought of it. Every pulse of loverlike feeling which had not been stilled during Eustacia's lifetime had gone into the grave with her. His passion for her had occurred too far on in his manhood to leave fuel enough on hand for another fire of that sort, as may happen with more boyish loves. Even supposing him capable of loving again, that love would be a plant of slow and laboured growth, and in the end only small and sickly, like an autumn-hatched bird.

He was so distressed by this new complexity that when the enthusiastic brass band arrived and struck up, which it did about five o'clock, with apparently wind enough among its members to blow down his house, he withdrew from his rooms by the back door, went down the garden, through the gate in the hedge, and away out of sight. He could not bear to remain in the presence of enjoyment to-day, though he had tried hard.

Nothing was seen of him for four hours. When he came back by the same path it was dusk, and the dews were coating every green thing. The boisterous music had ceased; but, entering the premises as he did from behind, he could not see if the May party had all gone till he had passed through Thomasin's division of the house to the front door. Thomasin was standing within the porch alone.

She looked at him reproachfully. 'You went away just when it began, Clym,' she said.

'Yes. I felt I could not join in. You went out with them, of course?'

'No, I did not.'

'You appeared to be dressed on purpose.'

'Yes, but I could not go out alone; so many people were there. One is there now.'

Yeobright strained his eyes across the dark-green patch beyond the paling, and near the black form of the Maypole he discerned a shadowy figure, sauntering idly up and down. 'Who is it?' he said.

'Mr. Venn,' said Thomasin.

'You might have asked him to come in, I think, Tamsie. He has been very kind to you first and last.'

'I will now,' she said; and, acting on the impulse, went through the wicket to where Venn stood under the Maypole.

'It is Mr. Venn, I think?' she inquired.

Venn started as if he had not seen her—artful man that he was—and said, 'Yes.'

'Will you come in?'

'I am afraid that I—'

'I have seen you dancing this evening, and you had the very best of the girls for your partners. Is it that you won't come in because you wish to stand here, and think over the past hours of enjoyment?'

'Well, that's partly it,' said Mr. Venn, with ostentatious sentiment. 'But the main reason why I am biding here like this is that I want to wait till the moon rises.'

'To see how pretty the Maypole looks in the moonlight?'

'No. To look for a glove that was dropped by one of the maidens.'

Thomasin was speechless with surprise. That a man who had to walk some four or five miles to his home should wait here for such a reason pointed to only one conclusion: the man must be amazingly interested in that glove's owner.

'Were you dancing with her, Diggory?' she asked, in a voice which revealed that he had made himself considerably more interesting to her by this disclosure.

'No,' he sighed.

'And you will not come in, then?'

'Not to-night, thank you, ma'am.'

'Shall I lend you a lantern to look for the young person's glove, Mr. Venn?'

'O no; it is not necessary, Mrs. Wildev, thank you. The moon will rise in a few minutes.'

Thomasin went back to the porch. 'Is he coming in?' said Clym, who had been waiting where she had left him.

'He would rather not to-night,' she said, and then passed by him into the house; whereupon Clym too retired to his own rooms.

When Clym was gone Thomasin crept upstairs in the dark, and, just listening by the cot, to assure herself that the child was asleep, she went to the window, gently lifted the corner of the white curtain, and looked out. Venn was still there. She watched the growth of the faint radiance appearing in the sky by the eastern hill, till presently the edge of the moon burst

upwards and flooded the valley with light. Diggory's form was now distinct on the green; he was moving about in a bowed attitude, evidently scanning the grass for the precious missing article, walking in zigzags right and left till he should have passed over every foot of the ground.

'How very ridiculous!' Thomasin murmured to herself, in a tone which was intended to be satirical. 'To think that a man should be so silly as to go mooning about like that for a girl's glove! A respectable dairy-man, too, and a man of money as he is now. What a pity!'

At last Venn appeared to find it; whereupon he stood up and raised it to his lips. Then placing it in his breast-pocket—the nearest receptacle to a man's heart permitted by modern raiment—he ascended the valley in a mathematically direct line towards his distant home in the meadows.

II. THOMASIN WALKS IN A GREEN PLACE BY THE ROMAN ROAD

CLYM saw little of Thomasin for several days after this; and when they met she was more silent than usual. At length he asked her what she was thinking of so intently.

'I am thoroughly perplexed,' she said candidly. 'I cannot for my life think who it is that Diggory Venn is so much in love with. None of the girls at the Maypole were good enough for him, and yet she must have been there.'

Clym tried to imagine Venn's choice for a moment; but ceasing to be interested in the question, he went on again with his gardening.

No clearing up of the mystery was granted her for some time. But one afternoon Thomasin was upstairs getting ready for a walk, when she had occasion to come to the landing and call 'Rachel.' Rachel was a girl about thirteen, who carried the baby out for airings; and she came upstairs at the call.

'Have you seen one of my last new gloves about the house, Rachel?' inquired Thomasin. 'It is the fellow to this one.'

Rachel did not reply.

'Why don't you answer?' said her mistress.

'I think it is lost, ma'am.'

'Lost? Who lost it? I have never worn them but once'

Rachel appeared as one dreadfully troubled, and at last began to cry. 'Please, ma'am, on the day of the Maypole I had none to wear, and I seed yours on the table, and I thought I would borrow 'em. I did not mean to hurt 'em at all, but one of them got lost. Somebody gave me some money to buy another pair for you, but I have not been able to go anywhere to get 'em.'

'Who's somebody?'

'Mr. Venn.'

'Did he know it was my glove?'

'Yes. I told him.'

Thomasin was so surprised by the explanation that she quite forgot to lecture the girl, who glided silently away. Thomasin did not move further than to turn her eyes upon the grass-plat where the Maypole had stood. She remained thinking, then said to herself that she would not go out that afternoon, but would work hard at the baby's unfinished lovely plaid frock cut on the cross in the newest fashion. How she managed to work hard, and yet do no more than she had done at the end of two hours, would have been a mystery to any one not aware that the recent incident was of a kind likely to divert her industry from a manual to a mental channel.

Next day she went her ways as usual, and continued her custom of walking in the heath with no other companion than little Eustacia, now of the age when it is a matter of doubt with such characters whether they are intended to walk through the world on their hands or on their feet; so that they get into painful complications by trying both. It was very pleasant to Thomasin, when she had carried the child to some lonely place, to give her a little private practice on the green turf and shepherd's-thyme, which formed a soft mat to fall headlong upon when equilibrium was lost.

Once, when engaged in this system of training, and stooping to remove bits of stick, fern-stalks, and other such fragments from the child's path, that the journey might not be brought to an untimely end by some insuperable barrier a quarter of an inch high, she was alarmed by discovering that a man on horseback was almost close beside her, the soft natural carpet having muffled the horse's tread. The rider, who was Venn, waved his hat in the air and bowed gallantly.

'Diggory, give me my glove,' said Thomasin, whose manner it was under any circumstances to plunge into the midst of a subject which engrossed her.

Venn immediately dismounted, put his hand in his breast-pocket, and handed the glove.

'Thank you. It was very good of you to take care of it.'

'It is very good of you to say so.'

'O no. I was quite glad to find you had it. Everybody gets so indifferent that I was surprised to know you thought of me.'

'If you had remembered what I was once you wouldn't have been surprised.'

'Ah, no,' she said quickly. 'But men of your character are mostly so independent.'

'What is my character?' he asked.

'I don't exactly know,' said Thomasin simply, 'except it is to cover up your feelings under a practical manner, and only to show them when you are alone.'

'Ah, how do you know that?' said Venn strategically.

'Because,' said she, stopping to put the little girl, who had managed to get herself upside down, right end up again, 'because I do.'

'You mustn't judge by folks in general,' said Venn. 'Still I don't know much what feelings are now-a-days. I have got so mixed up with business

of one sort and t'other that my soft sentiments are gone off in vapour like. Yes, I am given up body and soul to the making of money. Money is all my dream.'

'O Diggory, how wicked!' said Thomasin reproachfully, and looking at him in exact balance between taking his words seriously and judging them as said to tease her.

'Yes, 'tis rather a rum course,' said Venn, in the bland tone of one comfortably resigned to sins he could no longer overcome.

'You, who used to be so nice!'

'Well, that's an argument I rather like, because what a man has once been he may be again.' Thomasin blushed. 'Except that it is rather harder now,' Venn continued.

'Why?' she asked.

'Because you be richer than you were at that time.'

'O no—not much. I have made it nearly all over to the baby, as it was my duty to do, except just enough to live on.'

'I am rather glad of that,' said Venn softly, and regarding her from the corner of his eye, 'for it makes it easier for us to be friendly.'

Thomasin blushed again, and, when a few more words had been said of a not unpleasing kind, Venn mounted his horse and rode on.

This conversation had passed in a hollow of the heath near the old Roman road, a place much frequented by Thomasin. And it might have been observed that she did not in future walk that way less often from having met Venn there now. Whether or not Venn abstained from riding thither because he had met Thomasin in the same place might easily have been guessed from her proceedings about two months later in the same year.

III. THE SERIOUS DISCOURSE OF CLYM WITH HIS COUSIN

THROUGHOUT this period Yeobright had more or less pondered on his duty to his cousin Thomasin. He could not help feeling that it would be a pitiful waste of sweet material if the tender-natured thing should be doomed from this early stage of her life onwards to dribble away her winsome qualities on lonely gorse and fern. But he felt this as an economist merely, and not as a lover. His passion for Eustacia had been a sort of conserve of his whole life, and he had nothing more of that supreme quality left to bestow. So far the obvious thing was not to entertain any idea of marriage with Thomasin, even to oblige her.

But this was not all. Years ago there had been in his mother's mind a great fancy about Thomasin and himself. It had not positively amounted to a desire, but it had always been a favourite dream. That they should be man and wife in good time, if the happiness of neither were endangered thereby, was the fancy in question. So that what course save one was there

now left for any son who revered his mother's memory as Yeobright did? It is an unfortunate fact that any particular whim of parents, which might have been dispersed by half an hour's conversation during their lives, becomes sublimated by their deaths into a fiat the most absolute, with such results to conscientious children as those parents, had they lived, would have been the first to decry.

Had only Yeobright's own future been involved he would have proposed to Thomasin with a ready heart. He had nothing to lose by carrying out a dead mother's hope. But he dreaded to contemplate Thomasin wedded to the mere corpse of a lover that he now felt himself to be. He had but three activities alive in him. One was his almost daily walk to the little graveyard wherein his mother lay; another, his just as frequent visits by night to the more distant enclosure which numbered his Eustacia among its dead; the third was self-preparation for a vocation which alone seemed likely to satisfy his cravings—that of an itinerant preacher of the eleventh commandment. It was difficult to believe that Thomasin would be cheered by a husband with such tendencies as these.

Yet he resolved to ask her, and let her decide for herself. It was even with a pleasant sense of doing his duty that he went downstairs to her one evening for this purpose, when the sun was sending up the valley the same long shadow of the housetop that he had seen lying there times out of number while his mother lived.

Thomasin was not in her room, and he found her in the front garden. 'I have long been wanting, Thomasin,' he began, 'to say something about a matter that concerns both our futures.'

'And you are going to say it now?' she remarked quickly, colouring as she met his gaze. 'Do stop a minute, Clym, and let me speak first, for, oddly enough, I have been wanting to say something to you.'

'By all means say on, Tamsie.'

'I suppose nobody can overhear us?' she went on, casting her eyes around and lowering her voice. 'Well, first you will promise me this—that you won't be angry and call me anything harsh if you disagree with what I propose?'

Yeobright promised, and she continued: 'What I want is your advice, for you are my relation—I mean, a sort of guardian to me—aren't you, Clym?'

'Well, yes, I suppose I am; a sort of guardian. In fact, I am, of course,' he said, altogether perplexed as to her drift.

'I am thinking of marrying,' she then observed blandly. 'But I shall not marry unless you assure me that you approve of such a step. Why don't you speak?'

'I was taken rather by surprise. But, nevertheless, I am very glad to hear such news. I shall approve, of course, dear Tamsie. Who can it be? I am quite at a loss to guess. No, I am not—'tis the old doctor!—not that I mean to call him old, for he is not very old after all. Ah—I noticed when he attended you last time!'

'No, no,' she said hastily. 'Tis Mr. Venn.'

Clym's face suddenly became grave.

'There, now, you don't like him, and I wish I hadn't mentioned him!' she exclaimed almost petulantly. 'And I shouldn't have done it, either, only he keeps bothering me so till I don't know what to do!'

Clym looked out of window. 'I like Venn well enough,' he answered at last. 'He is a very honest and at the same time astute man. He is clever too, as is proved by his having got you to favour him. But really, Thomasin, he is not quite—'

'Gentleman enough for me? That is just what I feel. I am sorry now that I asked you, and I won't think any more of him. At the same time I must marry him if I marry anybody—that I *will* say!'

'I don't see that,' said Clym, carefully concealing every clue to his own interrupted intention, which she plainly had not guessed. 'You might marry a professional man, or somebody of that sort, by going into the town to live and forming acquaintances there.'

'I am not fit for town life—so very rural and silly as I always have been. Do not you yourself notice my countrified ways?'

'Well, when I came home from Paris I did, a little; but I don't now.'

'That's because you have got countrified too. O, I couldn't live in a street for the world! Egdon is a ridiculous old place; but I have got used to it, and I couldn't be happy anywhere else at all.'

'Neither could I,' said Clym.

'Then how could you say that I should marry some town man? I am sure, say what you will, that I must marry Diggory, if I marry at all. He has been kinder to me than anybody else, and has helped me in many ways that I don't know of!' Thomasin almost pouted now.

'Yes, he has,' said Clym in a neutral tone. 'Well, I wish with all my heart that I could say, marry him. But I cannot forget what my mother thought on that matter, and it goes rather against me not to respect her opinion. There is too much reason why we should do the little we can to respect it now.'

'Very well, then,' sighed Thomasin. 'I will say no more.'

'But you are not bound to obey my wishes. I merely say what I think.'

'O no—I don't want to be rebellious in that way,' she said sadly. 'I had no business to think of him—I ought to have thought of my family. What dreadfully bad impulses there are in me!' Her lip trembled, and she turned away to hide a tear.

Clym, though vexed at what seemed her unaccountable taste, was in a measure relieved to find that at any rate the marriage question in relation to himself was shelved. Through several succeeding days he saw her at different times from the window of his room moping disconsolately about the garden. He was half angry with her for choosing Venn; then he was grieved at having put himself in the way of Venn's happiness, who was, after all, as honest

and persevering a young fellow as any on Egdon, since he had turned over a new leaf. In short, Clym did not know what to do.

When next they met she said abruptly, 'He is much more respectable now than he was then!'

'Who? O yes—Diggory Venn.'

'Aunt only objected because he was a reddleman.'

'Well, Thomasin, perhaps I don't know all the particulars of my mother's wish. So you had better use your own discretion.'

'You will always feel that I slighted your mother's memory.'

'No, I will not. I shall think you are convinced that, had she seen Diggory in his present position, she would have considered him a fitting husband for you. Now, that's my real feeling. Don't consult me any more, but do as you like, Thomasin. I shall be content.'

It is to be supposed that Thomasin was convinced; for a few days after this, when Clym strayed into a part of the heath that he had not lately visited, Humphrey, who was at work there, said to him, 'I am glad to see that Mrs. Wildeve and Venn have made it up again, seemingly.'

'Have they?' said Clym abstractedly.

'Yes; and he do contrive to stumble upon her whenever she walks out on fine days with the chiel. But, Mr. Yeobright, I can't help feeling that your cousin ought to have married you. 'Tis a pity to make two chimley-corners where there need be only one. You could get her away from him now, 'tis my belief, if you were only to set about it.'

'How can I have the conscience to marry after having driven two women to their deaths? Don't think such a thing, Humphrey. After my experience I should consider it too much of a burlesque to go to church and take a wife. In the words of Job, "I have made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?"'

'No, Mr. Clym, don't fancy that about driving two women to their deaths. You shouldn't say it.'

'Well, we'll leave that out,' said Yeobright. 'But anyhow the times have set a mark upon me which wouldn't look well in a love-making scene. I have two ideas in my head, and no others. I am going to keep a night-school; and I am going to turn preacher. What have you got to say to that, Humphrey?'

'I'll come and hear ye with all my heart.'

'Thanks. 'Tis all I wish.'

As Clym descended into the valley Thomasin came down by the other path, and met him at the gate. 'What do you think I have to tell you, Clym?' she said, looking archly over her shoulder at him.

'I can guess,' he replied.

She scrutinized his face. 'Yes, you guess right. It is going to be after all. He thinks I may as well make up my mind, and I have got to think so too. It is to be on the twenty-fifth of next month, if you don't object.'

'Do what you think right, dear. I am only too glad that you see your way clear to happiness again. My sex owes you every amends for the treatment you received in days gone by.'

IV. CHEERFULNESS AGAIN ASSERTS ITSELF AT BLOOMS-END, AND CLYM FINDS HIS VOCATION

ANYBODY who had passed through Blooms-End about eleven o'clock on the morning fixed for the wedding would have found that, while Yeobright's house was comparatively quiet, sounds denoting great activity came from the dwelling of his nearest neighbour, Timothy Fairway. It was chiefly a noise of feet, briskly crunching hither and thither over the sanded floor within. One man only was visible outside, and he seemed to be later at an appointment than he had intended to be, for he hastened up to the door, lifted the latch, and walked in without ceremony.

The scene within was not quite the customary one. Standing about the room was the little knot of men who formed the chief part of the Egdon coterie, there being present Fairway himself, Grandfer Cantle, Humphrey, Christian, and one or two turf-cutters. It was a warm day, and the men were as a matter of course in their shirt-sleeves, except Christian, who had always a nervous fear of parting with a scrap of his clothing when in anybody's house but his own. Across the stout oak table in the middle of the room was thrown a mass of striped linen, which Grandfer Cantle held down on one side, and Humphrey on the other, while Fairway rubbed its surface with a yellow lump, his face being damp and creased with the effort of the labour.

'Waxing a bed-tick, souls?' said the new-comer.

'Yes, Sam,' said Grandfer Cantle, as a man too busy to waste words. 'Shall I stretch this corner a shade tighter, Timothy?'

Fairway replied, and the waxing went on with unabated vigour. 'Tis going to be a good bed, by the look o't,' continued Sam, after an interval of silence. 'Who may it be for?'

'Tis a present for the new folks that's going to set up house-keeping,' said Christian, who stood helpless and overcome by the majesty of the proceedings.

'Ah, to be sure; and a valuable one, 'a b'lieve.'

'Beds be dear to fokes that don't keep geese, bain't they, Mister Fairway?' said Christian, as to an omniscient being.

'Yes,' said the furze-dealer, standing up, giving his forehead a thorough mopping, and handing the bees-wax to Humphrey, who succeeded at the rubbing forthwith. 'Not that this couple be in want of one, but 'twas well to show 'em a bit of friendliness at this great racketing vagary of their lives. I set up both my own daughters in one when they was married, and there have been feathers enough for another in the house the last twelve months. Now

then, neighbours, I think we have laid on enough wax. Grandfer Cantle, you turn the tick the right way outwards, and then I'll begin to shake in the feathers.'

When the bed was in proper trim Fairway and Christian brought forward vast paper bags, stuffed to the full, but light as balloons, and began to turn the contents of each into the receptacle just prepared. As bag after bag was emptied, airy tufts of down and feathers floated about the room in increasing quantity till, through a mishap of Christian's, who shook the contents of one bag outside the tick, the atmosphere of the room became dense with gigantic flakes, which descended upon the workers like a windless snowstorm.

'I never saw such a clumsy chap as you, Christian,' said Grandfer Cantle severely. 'You might have been the son of a man that's never been outside Blooms-End in his life for all the wit you have. Really all the soldiering and smartness in the world in the father seems to count for nothing in forming the nater of the son. As far as that chiel Christian is concerned I might as well have stayed at home and seed nothing, like all the rest of ye here. Though, as far as myself is concerned, a dashing spirit has counted for sommat, to be sure!'

'Don't ye let me down so, father; I feel no bigger than a ninepin after it. I've made but a bruckle hit, I'm afeard.'

'Come, come. Never pitch yerself in such a low key as that, Christian; you should try more,' said Fairway.

'Yes, you should try more,' echoed the Grandfer with insistence, as if he had been the first to make the suggestion. 'In common conscience every man ought either to marry or go for a soldier. 'Tis a scandal to the nation to do neither one nor t'other. I did both, thank God! Neither to raise men nor to lay 'em low—that shows a poor do-nothing spirit indeed.'

'I never had the nerve to stand fire,' faltered Christian. 'But as to marrying, I own I've asked here and there, though without much fruit from it. Yes, there's some house or other that might have had a man for a master—such as he is—that's now ruled by a woman alone. Still it might have been awkward if I had found her; for, d'ye see, neighbours, there'd have been nobody left at home to keep down father's spirits to the decent pitch that becomes a old man.'

'And you've your work cut out to do that, my son,' said Grandfer Cantle smartly. 'I wish that the dread of infirmities was not so strong in me!—I'd start the very first thing to-morrow to see the world over again! But seventy-one, though nothing at home, is a high figure for a rover. . . . Ay, seventy-one last Candlemas-day. Gad, I'd sooner have it in guineas than in years!' And the old man sighed.

'Don't you be mournful, Grandfer,' said Fairway. 'Empty some more feathers into the bed-tick, and keep up yer heart. Though rather lean in the stalks you be a green-leaved old man still. There's time enough left to ye to fill whole chronicles.'

'Begad, I'll go to 'em, Timothy—to the married pair!' said Grandfer Cantle

in an encouraged voice, and starting round briskly. 'I'll go to 'em to-night and sing a wedding-song, hey? 'Tis like me to do so, you know; and they'd see it as such. My "Down in Cupid's Gardens" was well liked in four; still, I've got others as good, and even better. What do you say to my

"She cal'-led to' her love'
From the lat'-tice a-bove',
'O, come in' from the fog'-gy fog'-gy dew'."

'Twould please 'em well at such a time! Really, now I come to think of it, I haven't turned my tongue in my head to the shape of a real good song since Old Midsummer night, when we had the "Barley Mow" at the Woman; and 'tis a pity to neglect your strong point where there's few that have the compass for such things!

'So 'tis, so 'tis,' said Fairway. 'Now gie the bed a shake down. We've put in seventy pound of best feathers, and I think that's as many as the tick will fairly hold. A bit and a drap wouldn't be amiss now, I reckon. Christian, maul down the victuals from corner-cupboard if canst reach, man, and I'll draw a drap o' sommat to wet it with.'

They sat down to a lunch in the midst of their work, feathers around, above, and below them; the original owners of which occasionally came to the open door and cackled begrudgingly at sight of such a quantity of their old clothes.

'Upon my soul I shall be chokt,' said Fairway when, having extracted a feather from his mouth, he found several others floating on the mug as it was handed round.

'I've swallered several; and one had a tolerable quill,' said Sam placidly from the corner.

'Hullo—what's that—wheels I hear coming?' Grandfer Cante exclaimed, jumping up and hastening to the door. 'Why, 'tis they back again: I didn't expect 'em yet this half-hour. To be sure, how quick marrying can be done when you are in the mind for't!

'O yes, it can soon be *done*,' said Fairway, as if something should be added to make the statement complete.

He arose and followed the Grandfer, and the rest also went to the door. In a moment an open fly was driven past, in which sat Venn and Mrs. Venn, Yeobright, and a grand relative of Venn's who had come from Budmouth for the occasion. The fly had been hired at the nearest town, regardless of distance and cost, there being nothing on Egdon Heath, in Venn's opinion, dignified enough for such an event when such a woman as Thomasin was the bride; and the church was too remote for a walking bridal-party.

As the fly passed the group which had run out from the homestead they shouted 'Hurrah!' and waved their hands; feathers and down floating from their hair, their sleeves, and the folds of their garments at every motion, and Grandfer Cante's seals dancing merrily in the sunlight as he twirled himself about. The driver of the fly turned a supercilious gaze upon them; he even

treated the wedded pair themselves with something of condescension; for in what other state than heathen could people, rich or poor, exist who were doomed to abide in such a world's end as Egdon? Thomasin showed no such superiority to the group at the door, fluttering her hand as quickly as a bird's wing towards them, and asking Diggory, with tears in her eyes, if they ought not to alight and speak to these kind neighbours. Venn, however, suggested that, as they were all coming to the house in the evening, this was hardly necessary.

After this excitement the saluting party returned to their occupation, and the stuffing and sewing was soon afterwards finished, when Fairway harnessed a horse, wrapped up the cumbrous present, and drove off with it in the cart to Venn's house at Stickleford.

Yeobright, having filled the office at the wedding-service which naturally fell to his hands, and afterwards returned to the house with the husband and wife, was indisposed to take part in the feasting and dancing that wound up the evening. Thomasin was disappointed.

'I wish I could be there without dashing your spirits,' he said. 'But I might be too much like the skull at the banquet.'

'No, no.'

'Well, dear, apart from that, if you would excuse me, I should be glad. I know it seems unkind; but, dear Thomasin, I fear I should not be happy in the company—there, that's the truth of it. I shall always be coming to see you at your new home, you know, so that my absence now will not much matter.'

'Then I give in. Do whatever will be most comfortable to yourself.'

Clym retired to his lodging at the housetop much relieved, and occupied himself during the afternoon in noting down the heads of a sermon, with which he intended to initiate all that really seemed practicable of the scheme that had originally brought him hither, and that he had so long kept in view under various modifications, and through evil and good report. He had tested and weighed his convictions again and again, and saw no reason to alter them, though he had considerably lessened his plan. His eyesight, by long humouring in his native air, had grown stronger, but not sufficiently strong to warrant his attempting his extensive educational project. Yet he did not repine: there was still more than enough of an unambitious sort to tax all his energies and occupy all his hours.

Evening drew on, and sounds of life and movement in the lower part of the domicile became more pronounced, the gate in the palings clicking incessantly. The party was to be an early one, and all the guests were assembled long before it was dark. Yeobright went down the back staircase and into the heath by another path than that in front, intending to walk in the open air till the party was over, when he would return to wish Thomasin and her husband good-bye as they departed. His steps were insensibly bent towards

Mistover by the path that he had followed on that terrible morning when he learnt the strange news from Susan's boy.

He did not turn aside to the cottage, but pushed on to an eminence, whence he could see over the whole quarter that had once been Eustacia's home. While he stood observing the darkening scene somebody came up. Clym, seeing him but dimly, would have let him pass by silently, had not the pedestrian, who was Charley, recognized the young man and spoken to him.

'Charley, I have not seen you for a length of time,' said Yeobright. 'Do you often walk this way?'

'No,' the lad replied. 'I don't often come outside the bank.'

'You were not at the Maypole.'

'No,' said Charley, in the same listless tone. 'I don't care for that sort of thing now.'

'You rather liked Miss Eustacia, didn't you?' Yeobright gently asked Eustacia had frequently told him of Charley's romantic attachment.

'Yes, very much. Ah, I wish——'

'Yes?'

'I wish, Mr. Yeobright, you could give me something to keep that once belonged to her—if you don't mind.'

'I shall be very happy to. It will give me very great pleasure, Charley. Let me think what I have of her's that you would like. But come with me to the house, and I'll see.'

They walked towards Blooms-End together. When they reached the front it was dark, and the shutters were closed, so that nothing of the interior could be seen.

'Come round this way,' said Clym. 'My entrance is at the back for the present.'

The two went round and ascended the crooked stair in darkness till Clym's sitting-room on the upper floor was reached, where he lit a candle, Charley entering gently behind. Yeobright searched his desk, and taking out a sheet of tissue-paper unfolded from it two or three undulating locks of raven hair, which fell over the paper like black streams. From these he selected one, wrapped it up, and gave it to the lad, whose eyes had filled with tears. He kissed the packet, put it in his pocket, and said in a voice of emotion, 'O, Mr. Clym, how good you are to me!'

'I will go a little way with you,' said Clym. And amid the noise of merriment from below they descended. Their path to the front led them close to a little side-window, whence the rays of candles streamed across the shrubs. The window, being screened from general observation by the bushes, had been left unblinded, so that a person in this private nook could see all that was going on within the room which contained the wedding-guests, except in so far as vision was hindered by the green antiquity of the panes.

'Charley, what are they doing?' said Clym. 'My sight is weaker again to-night, and the glass of this window is not good.'

Charley wiped his own eyes, which were rather blurred with moisture,

and stepped closer to the casement. 'Mr. Venn is asking Christian Cantle to sing,' he replied; 'and Christian is moving about in his chair as if he were much frightened at the question, and his father has struck up a stave instead of him.'

'Yes, I can hear the old man's voice,' said Clym. 'So there's to be no dancing, I suppose. And is Thomasin in the room? I see something moving in front of the candles that resembles her shape, I think.'

'Yes. She do seem happy. She is red in the face, and laughing at something Fairway has said to her. O my!'

'What noise was that?' said Clym.

'Mr. Venn is so tall that he has knocked his head against the beam in giving a skip as he passed under. Mrs. Venn hev run up quite frightened and now she's put her hand to his head to feel if there's a lump. And now they be all laughing again as if nothing had happened.'

'Do any of them seem to care about my not being there?' Clym asked.

'No, not a bit in the world. Now they are all holding up their glasses and drinking somebody's health.'

'I wonder if it is mine?'

'No, 'tis Mr. and Mrs. Venn's, because he is making a hearty sort of speech. There—now Mrs. Venn has got up, and is going away to put on her things, I think.'

'Well, they haven't concerned themselves about me, and it is quite right they should not. It is all as it should be, and Thomasin at least is happy. We will not stay any longer now, as they will soon be coming out to go home.'

He accompanied the lad into the heath on his way home, and, returning alone to the house a quarter of an hour later, found Venn and Thomasin ready to start, all the guests having departed in his absence. The wedded pair took their seats in the four-wheeled dog-cart which Venn's head milker and handy man had driven from Stickleford to fetch them in; little Eustacia and the nurse were packed securely upon the open flap behind; and the milker, on an ancient overstepping pony, whose shoes clashed like cymbals at every tread, rode in the rear, in the manner of a body-servant of the last century.

'Now we leave you in absolute possession of your own house again,' said Thomasin as she bent down to wish her cousin good-night. 'It will be rather lonely for you, Clym, after the hubbub we have been making.'

'O, that's no inconvenience,' said Clym, smiling rather sadly. And then the party drove off and vanished in the night-shades, and Yeobright entered the house. The ticking of the clock was the only sound that greeted him, for not a soul remained; Christian, who acted as cook, valet, and gardener to Clym, sleeping at his father's house. Yeobright sat down in one of the vacant chairs, and remained in thought a long time. His mother's old chair was opposite; it had been sat in that evening by those who had scarcely remembered that it ever was hers. But to Clym she was almost a presence there, now as always. Whatever she was in other people's memories, in his she was

the sublime saint whose radiance even his tenderness for Eustacia could not obscure. But his heart was heavy; that mother had *not* crowned him in the day of his espousals and in the day of the gladness of his heart. And events had borne out the accuracy of her judgment, and proved the devotedness of her care. He should have heeded her for Eustacia's sake even more than for his own. 'It was all my fault,' he whispered. 'O, my mother, my mother! would to God that I could live my life again, and endure for you what you endured for me!'

On the Sunday after this wedding an unusual sight was to be seen on Rainbarrow. From a distance there simply appeared to be a motionless figure standing on the top of the tumulus, just as Eustacia had stood on that lonely summit some two years and a half before. But now it was fine warm weather, with only a summer breeze blowing, and early afternoon instead of dull twilight. Those who ascended to the immediate neighbourhood of the Barrow perceived that the erect form in the centre, piercing the sky, was not really alone. Round him upon the slopes of the Barrow a number of heathmen and women were reclining or sitting at their ease. They listened to the words of the man in their midst, who was preaching, while they abstractedly pulled heather, stripped ferns, or tossed pebbles down the slope. This was the first of a series of moral lectures or Sermons on the Mount, which were to be delivered from the same place every Sunday afternoon as long as the fine weather lasted.

The commanding elevation of Rainbarrow had been chosen for two reasons: first, that it occupied a central position among the remote cottages around; secondly, that the preacher thereon could be seen from all adjacent points as soon as he arrived at his post, the view of him being thus a convenient signal to those stragglers who wished to draw near. The speaker was bareheaded, and the breeze at each waft gently lifted and lowered his hair, somewhat too thin for a man of his years, these still numbering less than thirty-three. He wore a shade over his eyes, and his face was pensive and lined; but, though these bodily features were marked with decay there was no defect in the tones of his voice, which were rich, musical, and stirring. He stated that his discourses to people were to be sometimes secular, and sometimes religious, but never dogmatic; and that his texts would be taken from all kinds of books. This afternoon the words were as follows.—

“And the king rose up to meet her, and bowed himself unto her, and sat down on his throne, and caused a seat to be set for the king's mother; and she sat on his right hand. Then she said, I desire one small petition of thee; I pray thee say me not nay. And the king said unto her, Ask on, my mother: for I will not say thee nay.”

Yeobright had, in fact, found his vocation in the career of an itinerant open-air preacher and lecturer on morally unimpeachable subjects; and from this day he laboured incessantly in that office, speaking not only in simple language on Rainbarrow and in the hamlets round, but in a more cultivated

strain elsewhere—from the steps and porticoes of town-halls, from market-crosses, from conduits, on esplanades and on wharves, from the parapets of bridges, in barns and outhouses, and all other such places in the neighbouring Wessex towns and villages. He left alone creeds and systems of philosophy, finding enough and more than enough to occupy his tongue in the opinions and actions common to all good men. Some believed him, and some believed not; some said that his words were commonplace, others complained of his want of theological doctrine; while others again remarked that it was well enough for a man to take to preaching who could not see to do anything else. But everywhere he was kindly received, for the story of his life had become generally known.

THE END

STUDENT HELPS
AND THEME SUGGESTIONS

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INTRODUCTORY

All writing worthy of the name of literature confers on the sensitive reader a thrill of pleasure. It is out of gratitude for this pleasure that the world has always honored its writers of epic and romance, comedy and tragedy, genial essay and caustic satire. The pleasure varies vastly in kind and degree, and one bit of verse or prose may combine many forms of pleasure. There may be rhythms of phrase or line or stanza that charm the inner ear; there may be music of vowels and consonants; there may be exquisite imagery or faithful portrayal of men and things; there may be emotions of curiosity, humor, indignation, passion, worship, despair, courage, and pity. There may be simply the pleasure of enlightenment, of gaining a clearer insight into questions that perplex and baffle. And always there must be for the sensitive and intelligent reader the pleasing sense of artistry, of a job done with the right tools, with the right technique of verse or prose.

This collection of literature is intended for those college men and women who have learned already to demand honesty, intelligence, and taste in their reading, whose minds have graduated beyond the faked sentimentality of sob-sisters, and the boyish heroisms of Western stories. Between these covers there is literary fare of many flavors, but all of it adapted to mature minds and exacting tastes, and some of it is the work of the recognized literary geniuses of the last hundred or more years. Here is a small part of your rich heritage of emotional experience and intellectual insight. It is for you to read, to ponder, to enjoy.

Perhaps you would like to stop there. But it is part of your preparation for life, a requirement for your joining the company of educated men and women, that you should be able to use this same instrument of language yourself. Not that any one expects you to become a Newman or a Poe or a Swinburne. But the ability to write with clarity and correctness, and if possible with some force and charm, is of immense use both in college and after; without it the rest of your education loses much of its efficacy. Your reading in this book, therefore, will form the basis for class discussion and for written papers. You will have an opportunity to learn from the masters of prose how to put your ideas and your experiences on paper. Write always with honesty, saying what you have really felt or what you believe to be true. Work always toward greater and greater clarity of thought and expression. Develop your capacity for seeing the humors, the shams, the ecstasies, the tragedies that give life its enthralling interest. Search for the right word and the telling phrase; build the paragraph or the composition into a reasoned or a shapely whole. In sum, develop in your writing that sincerity, intelligence, and taste which are the earmarks of all good writing. And if you do, some of you will be writing literature; in a modest way, of course, but still literature.

BIOGRAPHY

Since Lytton Strachey published in 1918 his *Eminent Victorians*, biographies have been almost as popular as novels. They share bookshop windows with detective stories and bridge manuals. They are broadcast by the book-clubs. They are heaped on the counters of department stores. Why this startling vogue of biography?

The answer is for you to find out. First read the life of Florence Nightingale, one of the "Eminent Victorians." Then read the episodes in the lives of other characters, told by themselves. Can you discover why, in general, the experiences of persons you have never seen and perhaps never heard of stir your imagination and your feelings? Can you distinguish the particular qualities of each author? It should not be difficult.

To reproduce those qualities in your own work, however, is another matter. But if you can relate your own experiences or those of others well, you will have acquired an art that can transform your letters and your conversation, and will even make your future experiences more rich in the living.

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE—*Strachey*

Does Florence Nightingale's story rouse your interest? For what reasons? Have you met men or women like her? Do you think it would be a good thing if there were more like her in your home town and in college?

Do you feel that the portrait is true? Why? How much does Strachey quote? What effects do these quotations have? Is Strachey's style expansive or compact? Illustrate. What is the special flavor of Strachey's humor? Illustrate. Does the end detract from your admiration of the character? Does it seem to have the effect of a great tragedy, which, Aristotle asserted, purges our minds of pettiness through the emotions of pity and terror? Compare its effect with that of the death of Eustacia Vye in *The Return of the Native*.

Possible Themes. 1. A Character Study of a Reformer I Have Known; 2. The Story of a Strong-Willed Woman; 3. Are Army Officers Usually Callous and Hide-bound?; 4. Florence Nightingale Writes a Letter on the *Charge of the Light Brigade* (see Tennyson's poem); 5. Do We Need a Reformer in College?; 6. A Woman's Handicaps Today; 7. The Art of Strachey.

SCHOOL DAYS—*Thayer*

How do you account for the author's vivid recollections of childhood impressions? Why is her style particularly effective? Compare her method with that of Miss Foley in *One With Shakespeare* (see p. 339). Why do inanimate objects take on personalities in the child's mind?

Possible Themes: 1. My World of Make-Believe; 2. The Stupidity of Grown-ups; 3. My First Teacher; 4. My First Chum; 5. My World Was Full of Little Things; 6. My School Days.

UNIVERSITY DAYS—*Thurber*

Is there a serious aspect to this humorous piece of writing? What devices does the author use to prepare and touch off your sense of humor?

Possible Themes. 1. Laboratory Comedy; 2. Pulling Our Fullback Through; 3. R. O. T. C.; 4. A Field Trip; 5. And the Class Exploded; 6. Do Instructors Understand?; 7. Is College a Joke?

THE FIGHT—*Hazlitt*

When did Hazlitt write? Point out all the evidences of his zest for life. Point out the evidences of his zest for literature. Would a literary man seem out of place in a ringside seat today? Read Sherman's *Literary Discovery of America* (see page 131). What would his opinion be? What is the relation between literature and the more coarse and violent phases of life?

Possible Themes 1. Is Modern Pugilism a Sport?; 2. My First Fight; 3. Going to the Big Game; 4. People I Met on a Journey; 5. Staying Up All Night.

ADOLESCENCE—*Dell*

Which of these episodes interests you most? Why? Judging by what you have read, do you think Thurber, Hazlitt, or Dell got most enjoyment from life? If Dell had gone to college, would he have remained a Socialist? If you had worked as a factory hand and a reporter, would you be a Socialist? Are your opinions on religion and politics dictated by your emotions or by a dispassionate weighing of evidence?

Possible Themes 1. The Hardest Job I Ever Did; 2. The Older Man (or Woman) Who Has Meant Most to Me; 3. Being Sent to College; 4. How I Caught My Politics; 5. A Turning Point; 6. First Love; 7. A Date; 8. My Literary Efforts; 9. The School of Experience vs. College; 10. Why Is Biography Popular?; 11. What Makes Good Biography?; 12. The Values I Found in Biography (See Brewster and Burrell, *The Pursuit of Values in Fiction*, p. 123).

THE PERSONAL ESSAY

The personal essay offers a delightful form of reading. It may be as serious as Stevenson's *El Dorado*, or as amusing as Brent-Smith's *On Playing the Triangle*. But whether serious or hilarious, or only mildly entertaining, the essay brings us face to face with its author. We learn of his likes and his dislikes, and of his hatreds and his hobbies. We see him at his best, and perhaps at his worst. The writer of this type of essay is usually a good-natured person. He may have wandered into the farthest corner of his brain and dragged to light some fantastic thought or some idiosyncrasy, which he holds up to our tolerant view. Nevertheless, there is sometimes a sub-stratum of earnest intention underlying his wildest imaginings. And always, the writer of the successful familiar essay chooses his words to delight and shapes his sentences to please.

Some personal essays are scarcely distinguishable from bits of autobiography, such, for instance, as *The Dean's Croquet* and *Radio Taxi* in this book. But unlike the biographer the essayist is under no obligation to be strictly veracious; he can touch up his story as much as he likes. Furthermore he must hold his reader not by sheer narrative interest but by other stimuli: piquant humor, or personal reflection, or novelty of approach, or unusual charm of style. In the great majority of essays, however, story counts for little or nothing, and these other interests of humor, pleasant familiarity, novelty, style play a greater part. All the personal essays have one common characteristic: their authors are intimate, familiar, talking, as it were, in their smoking jackets beside the fire, rather than talking in their dress clothes remotely from a platform.

Accordingly in writing an essay of this type, always take a subject which has stimulated you yourself; not to indignation, however righteous, but to amusement, annoyance, pleasure or reflection. The subject may be old but you must have something fresh to say and an individual way of saying it. Stale ideas and stale expressions are taboo. Express yourself frankly without fear of egotism, but let your egotism be genial and ingenious. And study the essays assigned phrase by phrase, sentence by sentence so that you may absorb something of the essay mood and the essay style.

OLD CHINA—*Lamb*

Lamb began the *Essays of Elia* in 1820 and published them in the *London Magazine*. Who is the original of Bridget Elia? What brought the more "opu-

lent" times to Lamb? What are the secrets of his charm? What is the underlying thought of the essay? Is it old or new? How does it grow out of the sight of the new tea-set?

Possible Themes 1. When I saw ——— from the Gallery; 2. Saving Pennies to Buy ———; 3. A Picture (or a Book) Starts a Debate; 4. The Quirks and the Kindliness of Lamb; 5. My Sister (or My Brother) and I; 6. Cousins; 7. The Good Old Times.

A MISSISSIPPI BUBBLE—*Thackeray*

When did Thackeray visit America? Why? Has Thackeray caught the American habit of exaggeration? Why was Thackeray in a position to sympathize with the Bearded Lady?

Possible Themes: 1. Colored Folks; 2. Southern Hospitality; 3. The Joys and Sorrows of a Circus Freak; 4. The Romance of the Mississippi Steamboat; 5. Adventure on a Journey; 6. Queer People I've Seen.

HOW SHALL I WORD IT?—*Beerbohm*

Do you consider the first paragraph to be a good introduction to what follows? Is there any novelty in the subject? Note the author's figures of speech, his sudden turns of thought, and his choice of names. What do these things tell you about him? Do you think him really malicious? What would happen if we were to tell our real thoughts for even one hour?

Possible Themes: 1. A Letter I Should Like to Write; 2. The Art of Insult; 3. Sweetness and Light in Business Letters; 4. False Courtesy and True; 5. It's Tact That Makes the World Go Round; 6. Are We All Hypocrites?

THE DEAN'S CROQUET—*Coffin*

Does this episode seem real or unreal? Could it have taken place in an American college or university? Should there be more real intimacy between faculty and students? What would they have in common to do or talk about? What distinguishes this essay from autobiography?

Possible Themes: 1. The Humors of Croquet (or any other game); 2. Is Victorianism Coming Back with Croquet?; 3. The Professor Who Would Like to Murder Me; 4. A Way to Get Even with a Professor; 5. Revenge is Sweet—When It's Not Sour; 6. The Human Side of Teachers; 7. A Mad Party.

ON PLAYING THE TRIANGLE—*Brent-Smith*

What is fresh in the subject? In the treatment? What is the source of the author's humor?

Possible Themes: 1. Our High School Orchestra—A Reminiscence; 2. When I Had a Solo Part; 3. A Conductor's Antics; 4. The Consolations of Insignificance; 5. What Jazz Does to Me; 6. Negro Spirituals; 7. "Latest Song Hit!"; 8. Music and the New Leisure.

ON BEING THE RIGHT SIZE—*Haldane*

In what sense can this be called a personal essay? Is it as entertaining as the others? Is it less or more logically arranged? Why? How does the author apply biological law to political organization? Is the application sound?

Possible Themes 1. Some Wastes in Nature's Workshop; 2. Animals That I Envy; 3. Thoughts of a Wet Fly; 4. The Cockroach's Lament; 5. The World through the Eyes of a Mouse; 6. Our Vanished Sense of Smell.

RADIO TAXI—*Brown*

Is this straight autobiography? Has it been touched up?

Possible Themes 1. Radio Programs—A Cross-Section of American Civilization; 2. What Radio Does to the Farmer, 3. From Beethoven to Bunion Cures; 4. Radio Gadgets; 5. Education by Radio; 6. Crooners; 7. If I Were Boss of the Air.

EL DORADO—*Stevenson*

What autobiographical note do you find in this essay? Which do you think is the most beautiful sentence in the essay? Which is the most poignant? Do you agree with the statement made in the last sentence?

Possible Themes 1. A Dream That I Have Not Wholly Relinquished; 2. Some of My "Ineffectual Arrows"; 3. Marriage—a Happy Contest in Wisdom and Generosity; 4. The Weather—an Endless Delight; 5. The Happiest Persons I Know; 6. The Meaning of Success for Me; 7. Discovering Oneself through Writing; 8. My Favorite Essayist; 9. "Left to the Daily Papers."

EXPOSITION

Exposition, as you doubtless know, means "explaining." If it is good exposition, if it is literature, it gives pleasure to the reader—the pleasure of knowing or understanding something that was more or less obscure before. Even when the information is false, the clarity, sincerity, and taste of its presentation may give pleasure. But the main purpose of exposition is more practical: to widen the reader's knowledge and understanding. Narrative, description, humor, may be introduced as sauces to give flavor, but solid, definite information there must be. Whether it is a recipe for broiling chicken, a definition of "fascism," a complete report on the Muscle Shoals development, a critique of a novel, or a textbook on philosophy, no matter how charmingly written, unless it is accurate and clear, it has little value.

Of the expositions which follow, some are rich in literary flavor, some much less so. But all have value as the presentation of stimulating facts and ideas, and all afford illustrations of clarity and system. There are three things you may do with them: read them for the pleasure which any intelligent creature takes in absorbing fresh information and stimulating ideas; examine them to see whether the information and the ideas are sound and applicable to your own intellectual and practical life; study the literary presentation as a model for your own writing. Here is the most practical type of literature, for it should have appreciable consequences in your own action and you may use it as an instrument to influence or direct the actions of others.

You will do well to observe not only clarity and vigor of expression where you find them, but also the logical organization of the material. In connection with certain articles and speeches, such as those of Newman, Huxley, and Fairchild, it will be interesting to study the divisions of the topic, the introduction, the transitions, the conclusion, the paragraphing. This study of structure, which the rapid reader misses, is essential for the full appreciation of the expository art and for its successful practice.

ESSAYS ON LITERATURE

Here is a somewhat miscellaneous group of expositions on the craft and the criticism of writing. They do not form a textbook on the subject, complete and systematic. They are just the happy suggestions of writers, most of whom have made a name in letters, telling us what seems to them important in writing imaginative literature, and what important in appreciating it. One tells what it means to see things habitually with a sense of freshness and surprise. Another says that seeing and feeling aren't enough to make a writer; sooner or later there must be work. Still another shows how a great novelist learned his craft. Two collaborators make it clear that we like and understand certain novels, only partly because they are technically good, but mostly because they fit into our individual circumstances, tastes, and cravings; in short, because they make us happier. Finally, an inspiring college teacher of his day tells us that only the adventurous, the radical may feel the deepest currents in American life, can give to America a native, a worthy literature. Here is stimulating reading for its own sake, and a possible sidelight on the writing and reading you are doing in this course.

THE DAILY THEME EYE—*Eaton*

Do you know anyone who has a sensitive "daily theme eye"? Does he get more "fun out of life" because of it? Is there such a thing as a "daily theme ear or nose"? Did Hardy possess alert senses? Did Keats? Illustrate. Is it possible to cultivate them? How? Do you find any of Eaton's ideas also in Stevenson's *El Dorado*?

Possible Themes: 1. An Author Who Has the Daily Theme Eye (with quotations); 2. How Can I Learn to See?; 3. A Contrast between the Senses of a Man and of a Dog; 4. Cultivation of the Ear; 5. Description of a Person, House, Room, or Animal (Study the subject closely; describe it in vivid, concise sentences; avoid the obvious and uninteresting; introduce convincing detail); 6. Write two contrasted descriptions of the same person, street, or landscape seen under different conditions, or at different hours, or from different angles; 7. A Study of Sounds (or of Odors).

DOING WITHOUT WORKMANSHIP—*Montague*

Coleridge's *Kubla Khan* was composed in a dream and merely copied from memory, and Blake wrote his *Milton* without effort. Do these instances invalidate Montague's plea for workmanship? Are there any poems in this book particularly remarkable for perfection of form? Any prose? Illustrate by passages showing workmanship.

Possible Themes: 1. Native Gift or Hard Work?; 2. "I Never Make An Outline!"; 3. Impressionism in a Freshman Theme; 4. How Stevenson Learned to Write; 5. Campus Poetry; 6. Some Signs of Renascence on Our Campus; 7. Our Generation vs. the One Just Preceding.

THE NOVELS OF THOMAS HARDY—*Woolf*

What qualities besides the seeing eye and workmanship does Mrs. Woolf attribute to Hardy? Do you find any of her statements questionable? So far as you know, is she just to Hardy's style, treatment of fate, characterization, landscape, humor? Can you support your conclusions from *The Return of the Native*? Was it fitting that Hardy's body was buried in Westminster Abbey and his heart in his native village?

Possible Themes 1. Apply Mrs. Woolf's remarks about another Hardy novel to *The Return of the Native*, and amplify with quotations; 2. Hardy Lies in Westminster Abbey; 3. A Point on Which I Disagree with Mrs. Woolf.

PURSUIT OF VALUES IN FICTION—*Brewster and Burrell*

What novels or stories have repelled or attracted you most? How did you happen to read them? Can you explain, as the students in this essay have explained, the reasons for your likes and dislikes? Does the explanation lie in your own temperament or environment? Have your tastes in fiction changed? Why? Do you think your chief pleasure in fiction lies in (1) emotional excitement and novelty of experience, or (2) in the sense of human realities seriously faced, or (3) in the suggested solutions of your emotional and intellectual problems? Or do you find all three satisfactions in some books? Does the fact that a novel or story moves you deeply mean that it is great literature? Are there any other tests?

Possible Themes 1. The Values of a "Thriller"; 2. Why I Hated That Novel; 3. The Fairytales of My Childhood; 4. Required Reading in Fiction; 5. Falling in Love with a Heroine (or Hero); 6. Novels and My Philosophy of Life; 7. The Treatment of Sex in Fiction; 8. Wasting Time on "Westerns"; 9. Re-reading Old Favorites; 10. The Classics Bore Me; 11. Marriage Problems in Fiction; 12. Fiction That Misrepresents Life; 13. "Flaming Youth" in Fiction; 14. The Militaristic Spirit in Fiction.

THE EMOTIONAL DISCOVERY OF AMERICA—*Sherman*

How do the six points about the early discoveries of the American continent furnish a text for the rest of the essay? What did Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman discover about America? Which American authors of today seem to be discoverers? Are they represented in this book? What do they seem to have discovered? Where do you think the greatest opportunities for future discoveries in literature lie? In new forms of verse and prose? In portraying faithfully fluctuating modern moods? In depicting faithfully the American landscape? In profounder studies of typical American characters? In psychological portraits of misfits and pervers? In adapting literature to the talkie and the radio? In applying the old pioneering spirit to our modern social, political, international problems? In applying the new scientific outlook? In depicting an ideal American society and advocating the means for realizing it? If your instructor requires, outline Sherman's essay.

Possible Themes: 1. Mark Twain as a Discoverer; 2. A Modern American Discoverer; 3. The Radicalism of Emerson (or Thoreau or Whitman); 4. Experiment in Science and Experiment in Literature; 5. How Can the Scientific Discoveries of the Twentieth Century Influence Literature?; 6. The Case for Conservatism in Literature; 7. Political Radicalism and Modern Literature; 8. The Greatest Opportunity for the Literary Discoverer; 9. Possibilities of Literary Exploration in College Life.

DISCUSSIONS OF MODERN PROBLEMS

From your earliest childhood up to the present, you have been experimenting with your environment and becoming acquainted with it. Much of this time you have spent in merely satisfying your curiosity. Now, however, you have begun to feel certain moral and social obligations to your group. You wish to find your place in your community and in the larger social units of which, by birth, you

are a member. Some questions have arisen in your mind regarding these obligations and responsibilities.

The readings in this section have not been chosen to give final answers to your questions. It is only hoped that, as you read, you will learn how more mature minds, of the past and the present, have attacked and analyzed the problems which puzzle you. Perhaps they will guide you in your attempts to think things out for yourself. Since they cover a wide range of subjects, you should be able to find among them one selection which will throw light on the particular problem which is engaging your thoughts at the present moment.

WHAT IS THE COLLEGE FOR?—*McConn*

How much of the cost of your education are you paying? What service do you expect to render to society in return for the training which society has given you at far less than cost? In which of Mr. McConn's three classes do you belong? Is it desirable that the three classes should be separated? Do the superkindergartners set the pace in your college? If so, with what results? Is a Phi Beta Kappa key a sign of culture? What is? If a student has brains, should he be satisfied with a merely professional or superkindergarten course?

Possible Themes: 1. Mr. McConn Is Unfair; 2. Mr. McConn Is Right; 3. A Cultured Man I Know; 4. Does the United States Need a "Ministry" of Cultured Men?; 5. Does Literary Study Fit into Mr. McConn's Definition of Culture?; 6. Combining Swine-Raising and Swinburne; 7. College Life Means More to Me Than Courses; 8. My Best Course in Culture; 9. If I Ran the College, 10. Super-kindergartners; 11. My Opinion of Grades.

EDUCATION BY BOOKS—*Van Doren*

Does this kind of education fit into one of Mr. McConn's colleges? Quote the pertinent passages, and show how much agreement, how much difference there is between the two schemes of education. Have you ever learned to read with close attention to ideas? If not, is the fact due to lack of intelligence or lack of interest? Assuming that it would be desirable to spend four years on the world's classics of literature and thought, do you think Mr. Van Doren's list open to improvement? How many college students in a hundred could read Goethe, Marx, and Einstein, and pass a stiff test in all three? Is one who has a good grasp of the literature and science of the past a better judge of the world today? Give examples of "living by theory without knowing it."

Possible Themes: 1. Education: McConn vs. Van Doren; 2. Understanding the Modern World; 3. What Has Shakespeare (or Milton) to Do With Today?; 4. Reading Books vs. Studying Men; 5. Some Books I Mean to Read; 6. Literature 123 Is a "Snap," Because —; 7. One Book I Wrestled with and Mastered.

LIBERAL KNOWLEDGE—*Newman*

Cardinal Newman delivered this lecture in 1852 in a series outlining a projected Catholic University at Dublin. How far do his ideas coincide with those of Mr. McConn and Mr. Van Doren as to a liberal education? How far does he differ? Quote the pertinent passages. Is there any one thing on which all agree? What in your own words does Newman mean by "generalising"? Give an example from your own thinking. Could you state clearly the purpose of your education and show how your courses and outside activities fit into it? Do class-room discussions help you to think out and "generalise" your ideas? Do you ever find student discussions outside class turning to serious topics? Is Newman right in thinking

student discussions so valuable? How could they be made more valuable? What are the distinguishing traits of Newman's style? If your instructor requires, outline the lecture.

Possible Themes: 1. The Meaning of Generalising; 2. Knowledge Without Generalising; 3. Generalising Without Knowledge; 3. Student Discussions, Profitable or Otherwise?; 4. Learning to Think and Learning to Live; 5. Correlating My Courses; 6. The Greatness of England; 7. Liberal Education and the Future of America; 8. The Clarity of Newman's Prose.

FOUR KINDS OF THINKING—*Robinson*

Does a study of your reveries reveal much about yourself? What? Upon what subjects do you find yourself wavering from earlier beliefs? Do you attempt to rationalize them? Are new ideas necessarily sounder than old? Is Robinson right in saying that creative thought must necessarily "change" our minds on all important matters? What reason is there to believe that all human thinking up to now is not rationalizing? Do you think that McConn, Van Doren, Newman, and Robinson are in substantial agreement as to what human faculty ought to be encouraged, or not? Do they call the same thing by different names? If so, specify. Are they agreed as to the desirability of the results which would follow the cultivation of that faculty or those faculties?

Possible Themes: 1. My Favorite Reveries; 2. Good Reasons and Real Reasons for My Political, Economic, or Religious Creed; 3. The Case for Traditional Beliefs; 4. The Case Against Traditional Beliefs; 5. My Father (or Mother) Was Right After All; 6. A Case That Demands Creative Thought; 7. The Time I Trusted My Feelings; 8. How I Figured It Out for Myself; 9. Who Must Do the Thinking in a Democracy?

THE AVERAGE AMERICAN AS A THINKER—*Callender*

Have you ever heard anyone talk like the Mad Hatter? How often? Is he crazy or only a typical American, thinking? Why does he think that way? What is essential before he can think creatively, think to some purpose? Do Alice's remarks sound like common sense? Is common sense common? Who were right, the practical business men whom Hoover consulted or the thinking economists whom Roosevelt consulted?

Possible Themes: 1. The Mad Hatter in My Home Town; 2. The Mad Hatter on the Tariff; 3. The Mad Hatter on Disarmament; 4. College Professors at Washington; 5. My Instructor in Economics (or Political Science) Thinks; 6. A Business Man's Government.

EXIT THE GOSPEL OF WORK—*Fairchild*

Look up the Book of Proverbs in the Bible and *Poor Richard's Almanac* on the subject of industry. Are these maxims obsolete? The remedy for the depression, said Henry Ford, was hard work. Was Ford thinking, or only repeating a traditional idea? What is the real problem, over-production or maldistribution? How can scientists help? Is education complete when it trains you to think?

Possible Themes: 1. The Rôle of the Scientist in Our Economic Life; 2. What's the Good of a Machine Civilization?; 3. Soliloquy of a College Man in the Bread Line; 4. Solomon and Henry Ford Are Obsolete; 5. The New Leisure; 6. Education for Leisure; 6. Working for Fun, Not for Money; 7. What Phases of Machine Civilization Should Be Scrapped? 8. The Creative Replaces the Acquisitive Society; 9. Scientists and Artists Combine to Create the New Society.

THE SLUMP IN FOOTBALL COMMON—*Tunis*

Is football stock on the decline or the upgrade at your college or university? What do you know of the management of athletics there? Is "rough stuff" taught or tolerated? Are any of the athletes you know interested in intellectual matters? If they are, how do you account for the fact? Should athletics be run by coaches, publicity agents, and alumni who want to "make whoopee"? How many students get a chance to play games in your college the year through? What is the attitude of your student paper on athletics for all?

Possible Themes: 1. Football from the Inside; 2. What I Learned on a Prep School Team; 3. The Boy Hero; 4. True Sportsmanship; 5. Stadiums and Studies; 6. The Super-kindergartners at the Big Game; 7. A New Use for Stadiums; 8. Do Girls Worship an Athletic Star?

EVOLUTION AND ETHICS—*Huxley*

Thomas Henry Huxley, the famous biologist and champion of the evolutionary theory, delivered this lecture at Oxford in 1893, near the end of his career. He speaks of "taking an immensity of trouble over it." Does the workmanship show? In organization? In style? In tact? Whose sensibilities might have been offended? If your instructor requires, prepare an outline. Which human qualities, once useful or essential to survival, are now becoming less useful or positively dangerous? What is meant by "letting the ape and tiger die"? Has civilized humanity changed essentially; for instance, in regard to torture, slavery, the position of women? Are Huxley's ethics essentially different from those of Christ? What does he think of rugged individualism? Explain how the cosmic process can be thought of as unethical? How do you reconcile the justice and mercy of God with the needless and undeserved suffering in the world?

Possible Themes: 1. Huxley as a Stylist; 2. What Rugged Individualism Has Done to My Family; 3. Does Human Nature Change?; 4. The Ape and Tiger in Man; 5. God Is Just; 6. Men Must Cooperate; 7. The Mosaic Law Gives Place to the Christian; 8. Where Competition Is Still Desirable.

SCIENCE AS RELIGION—*Wingfield-Stratford*

Has the scientist always been a disinterested thinker? Can you give instances where personal pride has influenced scientists? Can science answer these questions: how and why did life begin? does the mind of man survive physical decomposition? how is telepathy to be explained? is there a purpose in the universe? Has science devoted proper attention to human psychology and human society? What forces have stood in the way of impartial and complete investigation? Has scientific advance done much to destroy the beauty of the landscape and the grace of life in America? Does it now threaten to destroy civilization altogether?

Possible Themes: 1. Scientists Are All Too Human; 2. Some Things Science Does Not Know; 3. Telepathy; 4. Why Not Political Scientists instead of Politicians?; 5. Does Science Serve the Good Life or Mammon?; 6. The Contribution of Applied Science to Ugliness; 7. Can Creative Thought Lead the Human Race to Destruction?; 8. A Few Needed Reforms in Science.

THE MORNING AFTER—*Gesner*

Is such a catastrophe possible in America? In Europe? Did the creative thought of the Wright Brothers produce a blessing or a curse to humanity? Can

they be blamed for the uses to which other men have put their invention? What motives impel men to destroy on a large scale? Should we disarm? What would be the consequences?

Possible Themes. 1. Gas Warfare; 2. Bombing from the Air; 3. Some More Blessings of Science; 4. A Race between Education and Catastrophe.

FIFTEEN YEARS AFTER—*Butler*

Is there any real reason why nations should go to war? Is there anything we should lose by joining the World Court or even the League of Nations one-quarter as valuable as what we should lose by a single first-class war? What interests are opposed to these policies, and why?

Possible Themes: 1. Can We Insulate Ourselves against War?; 2. Pitting Creative Thought against Human Annihilation; 3. College Students and War; 4. War the Antithesis of Christianity; 5. National Sovereignty Means International Anarchy; 6. What Is Patriotism?

YOUNG MEN IN POLITICS—*Cross*

Are the American people getting tired of chair-warmers, hand-shakers, and wise-crackers in office? Have they yet done any creative thinking on the subject? Can we ever have a decent country until somebody does it for them? Is there any business prospect comparable with running a government department or a community with honesty, efficiency, and intelligence? Why does the Russian experiment seem more interesting than our own? Can educated Americans achieve the same unselfish devotion to the cause of building a better society which the Russians have achieved? What can those who never expect to hold office do to promote good government?

Possible Themes: 1. The Old Guard in My Home Town; 2. Needed Social Reforms; 3. My Interest in Politics; 4. Young Women in Politics; 5. The Place to Begin Is the Campus; 6. A Political Figure I Greatly Admire.

MARRIAGE AND CHILDREN—*Russell*

So far as you have observed, do college women have fewer children than the average? How many of them have no children? How many children per family have the slum-dwellers and the feeble-minded? What will be the level of intelligence a hundred years from now if this process continues? Is there more or less patriotism in saving the intelligence of the United States than in preserving its wealth? Do you think any of Russell's suggestions are practicable? Have you any better to suggest? What has caused the divorces you have known? How many were cases of misfit persons who were really happier without each other? How many could have achieved a happy union by what Stevenson calls "a happy contest in wisdom and generosity" or by Russell's religion of humanity?

Possible Themes. 1. The Slump in Uncle Sam's I.Q.; 2. How Can the Poor Afford Children?; 3. Voluntary Sterilization of the Intelligent; 4. The Attitude of the Catholic Church; 5. What Can Be Done for Posterity's Brains?; 6. My Prescription for a Happy Marriage; 7. Is Religion Necessary to Safeguard Marriage, and What Religion?

RICHARD KANE LOOKS AT MORALS—*Edman*

What is the author's purpose in giving us a symposium on morals instead of merely giving his own views? Have you heard any of these views expressed be-

fore? Which view comes closest to your own? What do the views of Richard Kane have in common with the ethical ideals expressed by Stevenson, Huxley, and Russell? Does the younger generation need a positive morality? Or does happiness lie in scrapping the old virtues of honesty, courage, sacrifice, human sympathy, justice, control of the senses? Is there any subject more important on which to use "creative thought"? What do you regard as the moral foundations for a happy individual and social life?

Possible Themes 1. The Sins of Our Forefathers; 2. Sacrifice—for What?; 3. A Symposium on Morals; 4. The Moral Code of My Group; 5. Freud vs. Sir Galahad; 6. Life as a Fine Art; 7. Old-fashioned Morality; 8. The Golden Mean; 9. A Pattern for My Life; 10. The Need of Intelligence in Morality; 11. Books That Have Helped or Hindered; 12. What I Would Preserve from the Bible.

THE RESEARCH PAPER

In many of your courses you will be required to write one or more, shorter or longer papers based on reading. In preparation for advanced degrees, in certain kinds of journalism, and in legal training, more ambitious, more specialized types of the research paper are demanded. For most of you, therefore, there is probably no more immediately practical type of writing than the preparation of a research paper. To learn the method now means hours saved, grades improved, perhaps perdition avoided or honors gained.

This type of paper is written primarily to convey information, clearly, methodically, convincingly, and in this general aim it does not differ from many of the expositions you have studied. But it has the distinguishing trait of being based mainly and immediately upon reading, and it provides clues as to just what that reading was. Why these clues? Because your reader, whether professor or member of the public, is presumably interested in knowing just what sources you have used. Often a glance at your footnotes or bibliography will reveal the fact that your reading has been scanty or unwise. Furthermore, when a research article or book is published, the apparatus not only allows a rapid judgment of the thoroughness and impartiality of the work, but it also helps those who want to investigate further to check the author's statements and to get access to his sources of information. For this reason pay particular attention not only to the structure of these papers, but also to their use of quoted material and their apparatus for reference.

MARCO POLO—*Power*

Why can this biography be called more of an exposition than Strachey's *Florence Nightingale*? What is its dominating idea? How does the difference in Miss Power's and Strachey's purposes show in the choice of quotations? Note the coherent progress of thought, paragraph by paragraph, till Polo is actually started on his journey. Note the frequent bits of quotation from Matthew Arnold, Browning, Milton. Why are there no footnotes for these? What kinds of material are supplied with footnotes? Study the precise form and punctuation of each footnote, and be able to explain it. Study the concluding paragraphs and note their force. Why is the bibliography divided into primary and secondary sources?

Possible Themes: 1. A research biography, employing some expository material and attaining a unified effect.

THE SKYSCRAPER AND CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN CIVILIZATION—*Godfrey*

State the point of this essay in a sentence. Outline it.

Possible Themes: 1. A research paper in which two subjects are correlated, such as: Hardy and the Folklore of Wessex; Is the New Deal Socialistic?; Athletics in

England and America; William Morris' Treatment of the *Laxdale Saga*; The Historical Background of Stephen Benet's *John Brown's Body*, The National Parks and John Muir; Religion under Czarist and Communist Russia; Doyle's *White Company* and Froissart's Chronicle; More's *Utopia* and Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, War as Seen by General Pershing and John Dos Passos; Romantic and Realistic Novels of the South.

PARAGRAPHS FOR ANALYSIS

Though a paragraph is a short unit of composition as compared with an article or a book, it affords a good test of your ability to think clearly and write effectively. It calls into play on a small scale all the faculties required in longer pieces of exposition. Can you fix on a point and stick to it? Can you develop your thought logically and make the connection smooth and clear? Can you leave stamped on your reader's mind the essential thought? If you can, you have learned the principles of unity, coherence, and emphasis, which govern all expository writing. If you cannot do these things, you must be prepared to have your reader toss your paper aside with the remark, "I haven't time to waste on muddled and feeble writing."

Accordingly, study these paragraphs sentence by sentence. Test their unity by finding the topic sentence and seeing whether every other sentence develops that topic. Test their coherence by noting how each sentence is linked by thought, by words of reference, or by conjunctive words and phrases to the preceding. Test their emphasis by finding the most vigorous sentences and ascertaining what is the source of their vigor, and by noting particularly whether the last climactic sentence emphasizes the main point.

PLAYS

Novels, stories, and poems are written to be read. But a play is written to be played by actors, on a stage, and before an audience. Consequently the experience of reading a play is quite different from the experience of reading a story and more difficult. The reader, with the help of the lines and the stage directions, must imaginatively visualize the action on the stage as it would appear if actors were speaking the lines as they move about. But at best a play reader can never completely capture the experience he would have if he were a member of an audience. Both laughter and tears are contagious. The emotional experiences of the theater are more heightened than those of the study.

The three modern plays have been selected to represent as fully as possible a variety of dramatic experiences—a farce, a problem play, and a "slice of life." Two of them are full length plays and can be contrasted in scope with the one-act play. Two are "well-made" plays in the traditional sense, and one is looser and less formalized. All three are successful and effective on the stage, and, what is not true of all successful plays, all of them read well.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST—*Wilde*

A cat is not an imperfect kind of dog and a farce is not an imperfect kind of problem play. Plays, like other forms of art, are to be judged according to the intentions of the authors. In a serious play, a drama or tragedy, the author endeavors to create the illusion that the action is the result of certain characteristics of the persons in the play. In a farce or melodrama, however, the action is carefully plotted to create laughter, surprise, or thrills through the situations. The characters are the creatures of the plot. In solving the problems of the plot, the outcome is not bound by the laws of probability.

Could you tell which character was speaking many of the lines if the speaker were not indicated? Do Wilde's characters of the gay bachelor, dragon aunt, and resourceful valet suggest an origin for Mr. Wodehouse's stock characters? How do Mr. Wodehouse's clever speeches differ in method from Wilde's? Make a list of books and plays you know in which the plot is solved by the final discovery of the true identity of the hero. Which of these use the device seriously? Which farcically?

Possible Themes: 1. Mr. Wilde and Mr. Wodehouse; 2. Paradox, surprise, and incongruity as sources for laughter; 3. Detective story and farce as forms of unemotional art; 4. A modern farce comedy from Hollywood compared and contrasted with *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

SUCCESS STORY—Lawson

The title of *Success Story* suggests that the author wishes to offer more than entertainment through a theatrical vehicle. He asks questions, "What is success?" "What is life without a goal?" "What goals are worth striving for?"

Some such problem plays ask, "What is truth, and stay not for an answer." Others endeavor to supply answers and uphold some definite thesis. In which group is *Success Story*?

Which persons in the play are truly successful? Which are failures? Is Sol's failure due to conflicts within his own spirit or is it forced on him by the author to satisfy the requirements of the plot? Would Sol have had a better chance of avoiding failure if he had been a college graduate? If he had been Italian, French, or Irish instead of Jewish?

Agnes Carter says she is rotten. Does she underestimate herself? Jeffery Halliburton, in the third act, says he is happy. Do you believe it? If so, why is he happy?

When Agnes calls up Sol at the end of the play, why does Sarah look at him "with bitter understanding" and turn against him?

Is it true that Sol's sarcasm and bitterness cover up a gentle and sweet nature?

Possible Themes: 1. My own goal in life. What will I have to give up to attain it? Will it be worth the price?; 2. Modern advertising—is it a parasite in our economic structure?; 3. Write a brief scene with dialog and stage directions on one of the following situations: Merritt takes Sarah to supper at a restaurant. Sol goes to his brother's funeral. Merritt and Agnes visit a dancing place during the third act. Dinah and Fisher have dinner in their little apartment. Try to make your persons speak and act as they do in the play.

THE MOON OF THE CARIBBEES—O'Neill

This play differs from the others in this collection in two ways. It is written in one brief act and it dispenses with plot construction. What changes and developments would be possible or necessary if the play were to be expanded to full length? What might be gained or lost if the play were so expanded?

The play is without plot in the sense that there is no action carried through to a definite conclusion. It is an evening among seamen and firemen on a tramp steamer at anchor somewhere in the West Indies. Some writers and critics feel that well made plays like *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *Success Story* are so artificial in construction that they are remote from the reality of life as it is. Does the *Moon of the Caribbees* give you a more vivid sense of reality? Why or why not?

Are the persons in the play at all sharply individualized or are they merely puppets speaking different varieties of vulgar speech? Or are some of them indi-

viduals and some puppets? Is Donk's philosophy of women intended as the thesis of the play or as a characterizing detail to give him the illusion of reality? Is Smitty intended to be the leading character or is he introduced only as a contrast with the uneducated seamen?

Possible Themes 1. Write the synopsis of a story which would account for the degeneration of Smitty. Did he take to drink because of a disappointment in love or did his dipsomania wreck his love?; 2. Write an account of some experience you may yourself have had with the underprivileged in a mining camp, or lumber camp, the kitchen of a restaurant, or at sea; 3. Have you ever acted in an amateur production of a play? Write on some particular aspect or episode of your experience.

STORIES

We are all so much in the habit of reading magazine stories for entertainment that this habit may stand in the way of our studying stories as forms of literary art. The stories in this collection will furnish entertainment even to the unsophisticated reader, but they will yield even more enjoyment to the reader who reflects upon them and devotes some thought to the artistic problems the authors have set themselves to solve.

The stories have been selected, not as the "best" in modern English and American literature, nor as representative of the best known names. They have been chosen to present as great a variety of literary experience as possible within the space allowed by the scope of the book. Here the reader will find a variety of themes: revenge, love, adventure, social thesis, satire, the supernatural, romance, realism, humor, tragedy. He will find a wide spread, from the conventional well constructed and carefully plotted story, through impressionism to stream of consciousness. He will find a great variety of literary method and the use of various angles of narration: first person story by principal actor, detached third person story with omniscient viewpoint, third person story from the angle of one of the characters, diary, story within a frame where one character tells a story to another.

But the experience of reading the stories is more valuable than that of theorizing. Read a story first and then think about the questions raised in the study material. Then reread the story. A second reading will show you much that you missed on your first reading.

THE CASK OF AMONTILLADO—Poe

A revenge story, like a detective story, sets a problem and goes forward to a solution. What is the problem Poe sets in this story? Where is it stated? Is the solution credible?

Did you find the horror of the entombment of the living Fortunato revolting? Why or why not? If such a crime were committed today in your own community how would your emotional reaction differ from your reaction to this story of far away and long ago?

Are the persons in the story living and convincing characterizations or are they puppets made to fit the requirements of the plot? Defend your answer.

Possible Themes: 1. Imagine that you and your party, in the course of demolishing an old building or excavating a ruin, discover a walled-in skeleton. Reconstruct the crime from evidence you find; 2. Imagine yourself Montresor and write a fuller opening to this story, telling in some detail what injuries and insults you had borne from Fortunato; 3. Describe some abandoned and dilapidated house you have seen in such a way as to suggest evil events which may have taken place in it.

YOUNG GOODMAN BROWN—*Hawthorne*

How does Hawthorne in this story of the supernatural manage to leave the reader uncertain as to whether Brown actually visited a witches-sabbath or dreamed it? Coleridge says that stories or poems of the supernatural must "create a willing suspension of disbelief for the moment" if they are to be successful. Does this story do so?

The story is also an allegory of sin and evil in human life. Show how, whether actual or dreamed, the experience of sin and evil poisoned Brown's life. From evidence in the story show how the forces of evil had worked in the lives of Brown's ancestors and in the lives of other members of the Puritan community. Hawthorne's own forebears had hanged witches in Salem. How did he dramatize in the story the spiritual conflicts of his own life?

Possible Themes: 1. Look up "witches-sabbath" and "black mass" in an encyclopaedia. Explain the superstition as clearly as possible. Why did a priest have to participate?; 2. How the religious traditions of my family influence me today.

THE SIRE DE MALÉTROIT'S DOOR—*Stevenson*

In this delightful cloak and sword romance Stevenson follows the literary tradition of Dumas and Scott. Is the reading of it an adventure or an experience? (See *The Pursuit of Values in Fiction*, page 123.) What enables Denis to overcome his honorable scruples and consent to marry Blanche? Does she agree to marriage out of pity or out of love?

To what extent do the weather, the furnishings of the hall and chapel contribute to the effect of the story?

Is the formality of the conversation appropriate to the effect of the story or would you prefer it more colloquial and informal? Make a list of details from the first 15 lines of the story which are important in placing the story in its setting, introducing the characters, forecasting outcome.

Possible Themes: 1. After consulting available works of reference, give an account of French costume, architecture, or political conditions about 1429; 2. Is your attitude toward the 15th Century romantic or satirical? (See *Miniver Cheevy*, page 607.) Explain.

YOUNG MAN AXELBROD—*Lewis*

Did you find this college story primarily a story of character or one of plot? Do you feel that Mr. Lewis has invented Axelbrod for the purpose of contrasting his worthy ideals of college education with the unworthy ideals of most students? Or is he presented as an idealist who finally for an evening attains his ideal? Or does the author successfully weave both themes together? How does the author, in spite of Axelbrod's ludicrousness, make him a dignified and sympathetic figure? What is the ironical implication of calling Axelbrod "young"? What in college life does Mr. Lewis satirize? Does the shoe pinch you anywhere?

Possible Themes: 1. Write a satire on some particular type of college student which you consider affected, shallowly pretentious, or in some other way absurd; 2. Write a defense of, or an attack on, such useless aspects of life as poetry, music, and painting; 3. Do a character sketch of some eccentric person, endeavoring to understand and make clear the psychological reasons for the eccentricity.

ONE WITH SHAKESPEARE—*Foley*

In *Four Kinds of Thinking* Mr. Robinson (page 172) describes the aimless flow of free associations known as reverie. A number of modern writers, Miss

Foley among them, endeavor to communicate in fiction the reveries or streams of consciousness that go on in people's minds. Do you feel that there is psychological truth in Elizabeth's stream of consciousness? Have you read other stories or novels which employ this method?

If Elizabeth were a college student and could read this record of her school day reverie what would be her reaction—sympathy, shame, laughter? If she were quite grown up, married, and an author (as Miss Foley is), what would be her reactions?

Possible Themes: 1. Try writing a reverie on any one of a number of situations: your stream of consciousness during a dull lecture; or when you were in the junior high school; or when you dine with uninteresting people. You might intersperse what you said with what you were actually thinking.

I CAN'T BREATHE—*Lardner*

Letters and diaries have long been used as media for telling stories. Could an author characterize this girl any more vividly than she characterizes herself in her diary? Why does Lardner have her use bad grammar, punctuation, and spelling? Were you surprised at the ending? Could you devise a better way for her to extricate herself from her difficulties? Will she really marry Merle Oliver?

In one way story telling by diary resembles story telling by the stream of consciousness method. Both focus on what goes on in the leading character's mind rather than on a succession of events. How do the methods differ in emphasis?

Possible Themes: 1. Rewrite one of the days from the diary in the stream of consciousness method or rewrite Margaret's day as diary. Will Margaret's use of English resemble the girl's in *I Can't Breathe?*; 2. Here is an actual situation from college history. Three young men gave fraternity pins to the same girl—one in the spring term, one in the mountains in June, one at the shore in August. Write a scene wherein the three men meet and discover the multiple engagement. What is the outcome?

LOVE'S BITTER MYSTERY—*Beer*

In addition to being sound *Saturday Evening Post* entertainment this story poses something of a problem—what does one owe one's parents? In developing this problem how does Mr. Beer parallel Lakme's family issue with C. Smith's? In spite of social differences how is Lakme's mother like Smith's father? What story interest or motivation would be lost if Smith were left out entirely? Pruger?

It is sometimes said that all short stories involve some sort of struggle. In Lakme's life what forces pull in opposite directions? Does her moral struggle seem true to life or merely manufactured?

Possible Themes: 1. Do you know any one who has been victimized, financially or spiritually, by a selfish parent? Tell the story; 2. This story might readily be made into a two-act play. Write a brief scenario for such a play. Write stage directions and four pages of dialog for any scene that interests you particularly. You can of course lift lines from the story, but will arrange them play-fashion, not story-fashion.

THE END OF SOMETHING—*Hemingway*

Mr. Hemingway practises the art of understatement. Whereas most story writers tell more of their characters' thoughts and feelings, he endeavors to suggest much by telling little. In reading this story do you feel that you understand the suggestion or are you confused and annoyed? Is it more appropriate artistically to have the young people row past a ruined mill than a mill in operation? Do

Nick and Marjorie talk more like young people who are having love difficulties than Lakme and Helmuth? Than Denis and Blanche?

Possible Themes 1. Write an explanation of what, in your opinion, lies back of that part of the story which Mr. Hemingway has chosen to tell; 2. Tell the story of how your own first love affair terminated. Instead of saying "I" and "he" or "she," you may use fictitious names, such as "Nick" and "Marjorie." That is one way fiction is written.

ALAS, POOR BOLLINGTON—*Coppard*

This amusing story is based on the same formula that is usually associated with the work of O. Henry. Were you prepared for the surprise ending? Did you find it psychologically credible? Is it plausible that Phoebe should become suspicious of Bollington when she found him insufficiently jealous? That she should be glad to see him after five years so long as she had run away from him? That she should be furious when she discovered that he had run away from her?

What changes would be necessary if the story were to be told seriously as Bollington's tragedy? What would be gained or lost if the story were told from her point of view instead of his? Could the surprise ending be retained? What would be the effect of leaving Turner out of the story and telling it in the third person as *The Sue de Malérou's Door* is told? What is the effect of Turner's repeated references to Mrs. Macarthy? Does the use of illogical sentence structure and punctuation make Bollington's lines sound more like careless talk? Would this naturalness be sacrificed if the punctuation were normalized?

Possible Themes: 1. Rewrite the meeting with Phoebe, at the end, in the third person, omitting Turner. The lines spoken by Phoebe and Bollington to each other you may retain; 2. Rewrite the scene of the quarrel which preceded the running away as Phoebe might have told it to a friend after five years; 3. The most jealous person I have ever known. Narrate some incidents which demonstrate the jealousy.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN—AMERICANS?—*Steele*

Unlike the other stories in this collection, Mr. Steele's story has a thesis. It asserts that recent settlers from continental Europe and Asia are just as much American as the descendants of earlier settlers from England. Has he demonstrated his thesis? What literary devices has he used to make his thesis persuasive? Do you know any older Americans who share Andy's and Isaiah's prejudice against the new-comers? Do you consider thesis-stories less artistic than stories with no axes to grind? In spite of the old men's prejudice against foreigners and young people do you gain a certain respect for young Molly and Jimmy Krenk?

Mr. Steele's manner of telling this story involves difficulties. He endeavors to see the whole story through the eyes of the old men. Does he succeed in doing so? Are there moments when this specialized viewpoint is lost sight of? Could this have been done as successfully if one of the old men were made to tell the story in the first person?

Possible Themes: 1. Do you know of a situation involving lack of sympathy or understanding between the older generation and the younger? Or between older Americans and newer arrivals? Tell the story; 2. If you yourself are of the newer stock, write of your early difficulties in becoming at home in America; 3. If you are of older English stock, write of your early experiences in becoming acquainted, in school, perhaps, with a newcomer; 4. Perhaps your parents represent a union of the older and the newer as do Molly and Jimmy. Get them to tell you how they met, loved, and married. Then write the story.

NIGHT CLUB—*Brush*

Miss Brush's story, like Mr. O'Neill's play, does not develop any single situation or plot to a conclusion. It has of course a completely different cast of characters and setting. From the separate incidents how many stories do you think might be constructed? Why did the girl take the scissors? What happened to Claire and Sylvia and Amy? Why did the second visitor, the blond girl, change so when Mrs. Brady brought her the glass of water? The artistic problem in *Night Club* was to fuse all these stories into one whole. Has Miss Brush succeeded in doing this? What means does she employ? How does Mrs. Brady's addiction to the true story magazine introduce a note of irony?

Possible Themes 1. Expand any one of the flashlight incidents in this story. Explain and tell what happened before and after; 2. Narrate similar incidents you have observed in dressing rooms, wash rooms of Pullman cars, lobbies of theaters, or other places where strangers congregate intimately.

POEMS

Not all people like or understand poetry instinctively. For most people the enjoyment of poetry, like a taste for olives, is an acquired characteristic. Some readers are first attracted by the charm of musical sounds and colorful images and later acquire an interest in the meanings poets endeavor to communicate. Others are attracted first by the meanings and only later learn to enjoy poetical expression. At any rate we must admit that obstacles stand between the untrained reader and his enjoyment and understanding of the experience of reading poems.

In his *Practical Criticism* Mr. I. A. Richards studies some of these obstacles and points out how the realization of them may lead to their removal. The first difficulty is the difficulty of making out the plain sense of poetry. The meaning is likely to be more compactly stated than in prose, or the meaning may be suggested and not explicitly stated at all. The way to overcome this difficulty is to read poetry more attentively and more slowly than one usually reads stories, to reread oftener, and to read aloud at least once for each poem.

Similar to the difficulty of making out the plain sense of a poem is the difficulty of apprehending the feeling, tone, and intention of the poem. In simple terms this means that it is frequently by no means easy to be sure that the poet is deadly serious, ironical, satirical, or playful. To help the student over this difficulty the editors have classified the poems printed in this volume, not according to poets or to nationalities or to periods of history, but according to certain broad classifications of poetical forms or intentions. Narrative poems, in which the poet tells a story, are separated from lyric poems in which he expresses his personal thoughts and feelings. The lyrics, in turn, are classified in groups of similar intention—meditative, loving, religious, playful, satirical.

Another difficulty is supplied by the tendency nearly all readers have to make stock responses to emotional stimuli. A reference to home and mother may press a button and call up all the reader's own pathetic emotions so that he actually writes his own poem but thinks he is experiencing the poem which pushed the button. Thus even the most tawdry mammy song on the radio may produce the effect. Or a reader of poetry may have become so sick of tawdry mammy songs that he makes a stock response of dislike to the most authentic and honest treatment of the theme. If the reader were a horse we might say that he should be guided by the intentions of the poem instead of taking the bit in his teeth and bolting for home.

Another difficulty is supplied by our doctrinal adhesions. Because we adhere to Protestantism, for instance, we may prevent ourselves from understanding and

enjoying a hymn to the Virgin. Or if we uphold democratic forms of government we may fail to understand and enjoy cavalier tunes. What the reader needs to cultivate is what Coleridge called a "willing suspension of disbelief." We need not give up our doctrines, only keep quiet about them while we courteously listen to the poet singing about his.

If, in spite of all these difficulties, we persevere and finally learn to understand poems, we are sure to attain to new resources of enjoyment, new fields of adventure, and richer and deeper emotional experience.

NARRATIVE POEMS

In reading and rereading the three verse stories in this collection perhaps the first question that might profitably be asked is, Why has the author chosen to tell them as poems instead of as prose stories?

The Eve of St. Agnes, like *The Sire de Malétreit's Door*, tells a romantic story of young love in the Middle Ages. If you were to rewrite the first few hundred words of the poem in such prose as Stevenson wrote in his story you would realize how the flavor would be altered. *The Haystack in the Floods*, like *The Cask of Amontillado*, is a revenge story. But how much would be lost if even Poe were to rewrite it as a prose tale?

Next consider how well adapted the verse form chosen is to the intention of each of these poems. Is the slow and dignified march of the blank verse appropriate to the mood of *Michael*? Does the long and intricate Spenserian stanza assist Keats in building up his rich and ornate descriptions? Do the short, four-stressed couplets fit the rush of Morris's grim story?

Consider the moral problem of Michael. In choosing to send Luke to the city does the old shepherd choose between his duty and his inclinations? Or between two duties or between two inclinations? Would it have been better if he had chosen to sell half the land and keep Luke at home? Why did he do as he did?

It was not the intention of Keats and Morris to deal with moral problems in *The Eve of St. Agnes* and *The Haystack in the Floods*. In your opinion do these poems have less value than *Michael* on this account? Should a poem be judged according to the author's intentions or according to the reader's expectations? Contrast the two poems with mediæval setting. Which seems to give the more accurate picture of mediæval life? In which poem do you prefer to live in your imagination?

Possible Themes: 1. Rewrite as prose story the first three or four hundred words of any one of the three narrative poems. Carefully avoid the danger of carrying over into your prose any of the rime and meter of the poem; 2. Compare and contrast any two of these poems in material, intention, and expression.

MEDITATIVE LYRICS

In the *Poetics* Aristotle classifies poetry as dramatic, narrative, and lyric. In drama the poet shows men in action without comment. In narrative the poet tells a story with, perhaps, occasional comments. In lyric the poet speaks in his own person. The classification is still valid. The poet turns to lyric to express his attitudes and intentions, to communicate his feelings, to resolve if possible the conflicts of his own heart and mind.

In the poems the editors have grouped together as Meditative Lyrics mental and emotional struggle predominate. The poets seek solutions for the most important problems of their inner lives. Wordsworth seeks a mature recompense for the lost ecstasies of his youth. Tennyson, Browning, Arnold, and Henley wrestle with the problems of doubt and faith resulting from conflicts between the assertions of

the young sciences of geology and biology on the one hand and those of Genesis on the other. Each poet offers a different personal solution to the problem. What are these solutions? Endeavor to sum up briefly in writing the solution offered by each of the four to the problems of doubt and faith. What solutions have you yourself arrived at? Have you worked out your solution within yourself or have you accepted it second hand?

Consider the construction of the poems. How does the sequence in *Tintern Abbey* differ from that in *Michael*? Observe the paragraph indentations of *Tintern Abbey*. The second paragraph begins, "These beauteous forms . . ." and the third "If this be but a vain belief . . ." Mark the beginnings of the other paragraphs and endeavor to sum up in a topic sentence the central idea of each paragraph. You see that the poem has a paragraph structure like that of an essay and moves from one idea to another. Do the other meditative lyrics have a similar structure?

Possible Themes: 1. Have you, like Tennyson and Browning, lost by death a dear friend or relative? Has your religious faith suffered from the shocks of evolutionary theory? In verse or prose write of your personal struggles and state your personal solutions.

RELIGIOUS LYRICS

All the poems in this group are love poems—poems of the poets' love for God. How do these poems differ in their treatment of faith from those in the meditative group? How does Clough's religious feeling differ from Christina Rossetti's? From Tabb's? Which of the poems seem to you to be especially mystic in their religious emotion?

Some radical groups say that religion is the opium of the people. What do they mean? What grounds have they for saying so? Is poetry the opium of the people? Music? The talkies? The radio? Education?

Can one be religious without being a member of a church or subscribing to a creed? Is Tennyson, who voices doubts, less religious than Tabb? Can an atheist be religious? Do your own doctrinal adhesions render your appreciation of any of these religious lyrics difficult or impossible?

Possible Themes: 1. Write of your own earliest childish religious conceptions and feelings. How have these developed or changed as you have grown older?; 2. Make a careful paraphrase in prose of one of the more obscure poems by Tabb or Jones.

LOVE LYRICS

The love of man for woman and of woman for man has inspired more lyric verse than any other personal emotion that moves the hearts of poets. In the group of love lyrics here collected observe the different colorings given the emotion of love. Which are ecstatic? Which regretful? Which physical? Which spiritualized? Which are written to the loved person? Which are descriptive?

What images of coolness and purity does Keats use in the first part of his sonnet to prepare the reader to understand the conclusion as he wished it understood? How has Wordsworth built up the three stanzas of his poem about his wife to indicate the progressive stages of his deepening love? Does Auslander's use of one syllable words contribute to an effect of simplicity and deep feeling?

Since Petrarch wrote his sonnets to Laura, the sonnet form has been a favorite form for love poems. Why is this? Which poems in this group are sonnets? What technical requirements has a sonnet?

Possible Themes: 1. What is your favorite love lyric not printed in this collection? Transcribe it and explain why you think it is fine; 2. Write an original sonnet of your own. It may not be very poetical, but any college student

can write a correct sonnet. There is no better way to learn to understand and enjoy poetry than to try to write poetry.

NATURE LYRICS

Men and women have always been responsive to weather and natural scenery. Some respond appreciatively to external nature. Some passionately participate with it. Of the nature poems here collected which record appreciation? Which record participation?

Possible Themes: 1. Write a prose nature description: the city or country after a snow fall, rain in city or country, an animal you have seen in the woods, the sea or a river; 2. Compare and contrast the snow poems by Bridges and Frost.

DRAMATIC LYRICS

In writing dramatic lyrics a poet works much as a dramatist works except that he does not write a play. Tennyson imagines how Ulysses might have felt after he had spent some time at home with his wife Penelope and his son Telemachus and had become restless. He misses the activity that had been his at Troy and on his trip home. The lyric is an expression of what Ulysses might have felt. Does the poem also express something of Tennyson's own personal feelings? Does the conclusion deal with some of the same problems treated in *In Memoriam*?

In *My Last Duchess* an Italian despot of the Renaissance speaks to an emissary of his future father-in-law. What happened to the previous duchess? Why? Why does the duke tell all this to the emissary? Is the poem more or less lyric than *Ulysses*?

Why should *The Death of the Hired Man* be classified here instead of among the narrative poems? What lyric qualities does it possess? Does it communicate Frost's own feelings on the subject of the land, home, the family?

Possible Themes: 1. Write a character sketch of a hired man, or handy man, who has worked for your family; 2. Write a comparison of *Ulysses* and *Invictus*.

ELEGY

The modern elegy celebrates the dead and expresses the personal feelings of the bereaved poet. Frequently it generalizes and points out significant influences of the dead.

How long after his father's death did Arnold write *Rugby Chapel*? Could he have recognized the significance of his father's influence so clearly if he had written immediately after his death? Do you know any one who might be described in terms similar to those used by Arnold in praising his father? Compare this poem with *Dover Beach*. Is a similar note sounded?

Rossetti was a painter as well as a poet. Do you recognize a painter's touch in *My Sister's Sleep*? How does Rossetti make you hear the silence? How does he indicate his belief in immortality?

What immortality does Lindsay promise for Altgeld? What effect does the poet secure by his use of the long lines? Is the poem more modern in spirit than the others?

Possible Themes: 1. Write a verse or prose elegy for some one, now dead, whom you loved or admired; 2. Write a brief narrative of your earliest contact with death. Express your feelings as you recollect them.

ODES

Odes are poems of praise addressed to a person, a class of persons, a city, an art object, a natural force, or a moral abstraction. They usually combine description with meditation and always express the poet's personal attitude.

Wordsworth was seven years older when he wrote *Ode to Duty* than when he wrote *Tintern Abbey*. Does this fact explain his change of emotional attitude? How does Shelley's attitude toward liberty compare with Wordsworth's? It has been said that the theme of Keats' ode is that the permanence of art is a comfort in an impermanent world. What evidence do you find in the poem in favor of this view? Against it?

How well do the rhythmical rather than metrical lines of the Whitman and Sandburg odes seem adapted to the subjects of the odes?

Possible Themes: 1. Describe the two scenes painted on the two sides of the vase Keats addresses; 2. Write on the place for the pioneer, or his lack of a place, in modern American life.

SONGS

Most lyrics may be sung and many that were not written to be sung have received musical settings. But a song is a lyric written expressly to be sung. Many of Burns's songs were written to old tunes.

How many of the songs printed in this collection have you yourself sung or heard sung? Do songs as a rule have greater or less intellectual content than other lyric forms? Which of these songs seem to call for group singing? Which for solo singing? Do your doctrinal adhesions interfere with your appreciation of *Willie Brewed a Peck O' Maut* or *Marching Along*? Which of the songs seem almost to supply their own musical settings?

Possible Themes: 1. Tell the story of some very pleasant experience you have had in group singing—around a camp fire, perhaps, or a fireplace or in church; 2. Tell of your pleasure, or displeasure, in hearing for the first time some famous solo singer.

LIGHTER LYRICS

Poets, like other people, cannot be serious all of the time. In their lighter lyrics they express their moods of playfulness and gaiety. These lighter lyrics need not be inferior to the solemn ones any more than smiles are inferior to tears. Observe the frequent use of the artificial French verse forms: the rondeau, the triolet, the ballade. Why should these artificial forms be appropriate to verse in lighter moods? Are they inappropriate for more serious verse?

Possible Themes: 1. Write a prose letter of advice in a jocular mood; 2. Study out the rime scheme and metrical structure of the triolet and write one.

SATIRE

Not all of a poet's possible emotions are gentle or kindly. Even a poet sometimes becomes angry. When he does he may write satire. Satire has been defined as denunciation combined with humor. The humor is used, not to soften the edge of the satire, but to give it edge and point.

What do these satires denounce? Does Byron attack Wordsworth and Southey for their poetry or reactionary politics or both? Is Clough ridiculing the Ten Commandments or a worldly society? Is Robinson ridiculing romance or emotionally dishonest posers? Does Eliot denounce religion or a worldly church organization? Does Cummings denounce patriotism or dishonest political oratory?

Do any of these satires probe moral hypocrisies or weaknesses in your own character, or are you able to see flaws only in other people? Do your stock responses render difficult or impossible your appreciation of any of the poems in this collection?

Possible Themes. 1. Transcribe Cummings' sonnet with conventional punctuation and capitalization. Is he in any way justified in having it all printed in lower case?; 2. Write a verse or prose satire on some institution, group of people, or person. Don't forget that humor is a necessary ingredient and that the satirist uses edged tools, not clubs and brick-bats; 3. Which poem in this collection do you least appreciate? To what fault of your own is this lack of appreciation due?

THE NOVEL

THE RETURN OF THE NATIVE—Hardy

Two of the essays on literature included in this volume may be recommended as prefaces to the reading of Hardy's *The Return of the Native*, because they suggest why Hardy is worth reading and why your emotional response to the book may be worth studying. They are *The Novels of Thomas Hardy* (p. 115) and *The Pursuit of Values in Fiction* (p. 123). After all, the primary purpose of reading fiction is to live intensely and intelligently through the experience it narrates, not merely to dissect it for class-room purposes. By all means read the book for the sombre pleasure it was meant to give. But realize that several kinds of pleasure or interest are involved, and read with sufficient care and attention to see that you get them all. The greatness of *The Return of the Native* lies in the harmonious blending of four elements of interest: setting, character, plot, philosophy.

In some pieces of fiction one only of these elements predominates, and the others are subordinated or non-existent. In Conrad's *Youth*, though character and plot are by no means absent, setting—the sights and sounds of that ill-starred voyage—forms the chief fascination. In Jane Austen's novels, setting and philosophy count for almost nothing; plot, though skilful, is secondary, and it is the characters that keep that early 19th century world eternally alive. In most detective novels there is no philosophy; character and setting are usually perfunctory; it is for the plot that one races through the book. And there are novels like Morgan's *Fountain* or Shorthouse's *John Inglesant* in which setting, character, and plot are all overshadowed by the message, the idea, the philosophy.

It is one of the distinctions of *The Return of the Native* that all four elements are there and contribute powerfully to the effect. We can feel the thrill of being transported to a strange bit of country a hundred years ago and not only of seeing it through eyes of almost microscopic accuracy, but also of sensing its atmosphere through all the changes of night and day, from August heat to December cold. We can make the acquaintance of characters as passionate as Eustacia Vye, as absurd as Christian Cantle, and as heroic as Clym Yeobright. We can watch the steady march of events toward catastrophe. We come to feel that Hardy's few brief comments on man's destiny, however repellent they may be to the Christian's faith or to the youth's optimism, have a certain claim to consideration. And all the elements of Hardy's novel are interwoven: Egdon Heath in some degree moulds the characters and the events, and is perfectly fitted to form a background for the tragedy and to express the mood of Hardy's philosophy. In *The Return of the Native* several kinds of genius have blended with workmanship to produce a masterpiece.

THE SETTING

What is a heath? What forms of vegetation grow on it? What eerie scene in dramatic literature is set upon a heath? Why does Hardy select this background

for his novel? Why does he prophesy: "Human souls may find themselves in closer and closer harmony with external things wearing a somberness distasteful to our race when it was young"? Do you feel that Hardy's soul was in harmony with Egdon, that he loved it and would have been content to live there? Can you understand why?

As you read, observe and reproduce in your imagination the details of light, darkness, color, sound, form, of vegetable and animal life that reveal Hardy's extraordinary powers of observation. Note or copy out some of the most striking of these details.

What larger effects of vast spaces, of remote ages does Hardy convey, and how? Do these effects influence our impression of the heath and of the human beings who live on it? What old customs among the heath people does Hardy describe? Do these add to our feeling about the heath? Is it significant or not that so many scenes take place at night?

Possible Themes. 1. An Expository Description of Egdon; 2. Light and Shade on Egdon; 3. Hardy's "Daily Theme Eye"; 4. The Antiquity of Egdon; 5. Customs of the Country; 6. The Effect of the Heath on the Characters and Their Actions; 7. The Influence of Setting on My Life.

THE CHARACTERS

Which of the characters interests you most? Give specific reasons. Do any of them seem impossible? Do any seem to lack definiteness?

How is Eustacia Vye first introduced, and with what effect? How is the portrait gradually filled in? How has Hardy's interest in philosophy, art, and heredity contributed to the description in Chapter VII? Which qualities in Eustacia provoke your admiration, and which your condemnation? Which scenes in which she appears stay with you? Can you find out why? What is Hardy's attitude toward her as shown by his comments? Quote them.

Do you feel that Hardy shows particular sympathy with Clym Yeobright? What do you think they had in common? What motives led Clym back to Egdon and finally to the life of a preacher? Can you sympathize with them?

Why did not Wildeve marry Eustacia in the first place? Would he have been happy with her had their elopement proved successful? What qualities made his career and his marriage a failure?

Is Venn too good to be true? Are all his activities plausibly explained? For what various purposes does Hardy use the conversations of the minor characters? Memorize or write down some of their remarks. Does Hardy's humor seem more or less natural than that of Shakespeare, Dickens, or Mark Twain?

Possible Themes: 1. Hardy's Treatment of Eustacia Vye; 2. Clym Yeobright—Hardy's Ideal?; 3. The Comic Characters; 4. The Most Delightful Simpleton in Literature; 4. A Contrast between Eustacia and Thomasin; 5. The Ubiquitous Reddleman; 6. Superstitions among the Egdon Folk.

THE PLOT

On what day of the year does the novel open? On what day does the tragic climax take place? Is this close correspondence unintentional? How many of the crucial events are directly conditioned by the labors or festivities of the rural year? Point out step by step the growth of the fatal attraction of Eustacia to the returning native and then its equally fatal replacement by the old passion for Wildeve. How is the dramatic effect of the disaster prepared for?

Does Hardy emphasize the part that trivial happenings play in our lives? Mention a number of them, and state their consequences. Does Hardy make an undue

proportion of trivial accidents lead to disastrous consequences? Is there any ironic force in the thought that human fates sometimes depend on the inadvertent chatter of a child or the behavior of inanimate things?

Possible Themes. 1. The Architectural Scheme of *The Return of the Native*; 2. The Seasons Play Their Part in Tragedy; 3. How Hardy Holds Interest; 4. Does Hardy Load the Dice?; 5. The Miraculous Diggory.

THE PHILOSOPHY

Note the passages in which Hardy comments on the cruelty of Circumstance and the pervading sadness of man's lot. How has he fitted the whole novel to this belief? Consult a biography and find out whether Hardy was a hypochondriac. Read Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics* in this book. Does there seem to be any relation between Huxley's and Hardy's thought? What scientific facts seem to bear out the view that the Cosmos is not concerned with Justice or Mercy to Man? What facts, if any, in your experience seem to confirm it? What is the answer of the Christian religion? Has Hardy a right to insert doubtful and depressing views in a novel meant to entertain? Do these add to or detract from the novel's interest for you?

Possible Themes. 1. Hardy's Case against the Cosmos; 2. A Critique of Hardy's Philosophy; 3. Suggest any new social arrangements, scientific discoveries, or educational reforms that might have made Egdon folk happier; 4. Does Hardy's Philosophy Inspire Courage or Defeatism?; 5. Hardy and Huxley.